

Tsuki ga Michibiku Isekai Douchuu
Extra Stories
by Azumi Kei

[Novel Updates](#)

Extra Story I - At that time, Modern day ①

Nakatsuhara High School is a public school, and is considered to be the best preparatory school in the city. It also leads in the prefecture polls, and thus is one of the top prep schools in the country.

There are five classes per school year and usually they are all full.

As there are other high schools to the north, south, east, and west of Nakatsuhara, it is often referred to as a Junior High.

Its main feature is the prep school as mentioned earlier, but it's said that there is an emphasis on extracurricular activities too. A prep school on top of being public. That doesn't give the image of being active in club activities, but this place is different.

There are strong and weak clubs, but no matter which one it is, they all give their best in their clubs. It does not mean they are not studying, it's just that their enthusiasm is fully centered on club activities.

Maybe the new students are affected by this vigor. Most of them end up putting their spirit in club activities.

Nakatsuhara high school continuing its reign in the first place of prep schools with that kind of emphasis, even the ones living around the place find it mysterious. It is a popular saying that when you enter that school, you will end up being skilled in literary and military arts. Strangely, this kind of popularity doesn't turn into criticism of any way.

The weakest club in the list is the baseball team. Koshien was never in their reach, nevermind that they don't even reach the Top 8. (So baseball clubs are usually the strongest in all schools as baseball is pretty popular in Japan as seen in all animes featuring high school)

The strongest club is the archery club. For the past 23 years Nakatsuhara high school has represented the prefecture in the national tournaments.

Either by black magic or by systematically gathering them, there were only beautiful people in the archery club. Did they enter because they were beautiful or were they beautiful because they entered? Either way, it wasn't normal. Their fashion sense, however, seemed to be lagging behind current trends, so their clothes still stand out... and then there were the men...

In that environment there are handsome men and beautiful woman around. Don't misunderstand though. There are neither harems nor reverse harems, instead there's a rather heinous practice menu. Coupled with their excellent grades, ordinary people would flock to the club and join due to these people, leading to it becoming the most popular club in the school. If you could no longer keep up with the menu and began to fall behind in practice, you would be kicked out, so there is only a scarce amount of normal people. Or more like, by the second year, only the super strong ones remain. Why are the good-looking ones also coupled with will-power?

Because of this, the ordinary people who joined the archery club were considered "brave". So Makoto, who was the only one that's been there for more than two years, was the only "brave" one remaining. People had been looking at him more frequently since he joined. It was natural of course. Him remaining in archery meant that he is the only one who can introduce you to one of those beauties.

There are people who speak to him casually to learn information about the heavenly beauties from an ordinary person. There are those who also think that he can be used as a conveyer of the students' valuable love confessions... In fact, there are couples who admit they started dating due to him introducing them to each other. As a result, (as thanks from the female students), Makoto had received obligation chocolates for quite a while.

Having heard various rants and confessions from others, witnessing the handing over of what was apparently a "confession of love" letter, somehow Makoto was begged by fan clubs for things like photos, "I'm this kind of character, and I usually wish that you yourselves would be more direct, I wonder if it will end so conveniently. Not under normal circumstances."

As for the photo they had asked for, he was cut out of it during editing. He was about ready to cry.

However, his help had ended when he disappeared during autumn of his 2nd year for a completely different reason. He was dropped into a different world. Dutifully leaving a letter to only his family, he had jokingly asked his parents to do several things for him.

His parents were unexpectedly enthusiastic, because this is basically the last request of their son, so they did their best to fulfill it. And well, they granted practically all of them in a pace that can't be joked about. One of those requests had to do with the school he was enrolled in which is facing a problem currently, or more like, it has turned into an uproar.

"That idiot! Of all the things he could do, he escapes to another country!"

'In this kind of busy period to top it off' is what one girl said as she left the staff room. Following her from behind was a good-looking man. As he slid the door of the staff room shut, it was clear he was close to 2 metres in height... Narrow eyes, his hair hanging like a thread on both sides, he made a gentle expression. Having an athletic physique as well, he is a young man that gives a sense of safety.

"Higashi, no matter how many times we try, the situation won't change..."

"I know that! But why do I suddenly have no vice-captain in the club!? Where is Vaduz, tell me!"

"It's the capital of Liechtenstein. Next to Switzerland."

He responded knowledgeably to the honest girl she called Azuma of the East. However in this situation it was not the answer the girl was looking for, and caused further frustration.

"I know! I'm not asking you a question about geography!"

She was completely throwing her anger on the wrong person. And in response, the man fell silent.

That's right, this is the story Higashi Yukari heard about the archery club vice-captain's sudden disappearance. It was in the weekend and the club was also in the middle of a break as well, so she ended up hearing this news at monday. This is probably what's called 'bad timing'. The moment she heard this story and her eyes wide in surprise still remained vividly in her mind. Of course

this was not limited to the archery, but was a common reaction by all of the students who had heard the story.

“Without contacting a single person, what were you thinking Misumi!”

“Oh, ha-ha.”

The young man felt that, no matter what he said, she would get angry about it. So he decided to just laugh vaguely. His decision was a safe one.

“His family says it was actually a high school exchange program, and that he was sent there all by his lonesome self. He’s located in Liechtenstein. The reason why he’s there is the part that doesn’t make sense.”

“Right.”

“It’d be more believable if you said he’d been kidnapped!”

“That’s insensitive Higashi.”

But that’s exactly what happened, Higashi.

The youth’s chiding voice fell on deaf ears. In the conversation where the man was practically completely ignored, she felt like she had an idea of the reason he went to study abroad.. It was completely off the mark, but her situation led her to that reasoning.

It is a story of when the previous captain was going to assign a new captain. The day when someone was stealthily waiting to consult him about it.

(Is this a joke? Disgraceful behavior is disgraceful behavior and I was agonizing in embarrassment, but to change schools and run away? But that’s the only reason I can think of for his sudden transfer...)

Higashi is not the type you would call cute. She looked like the daughter of a good home and was often called a beauty because of her dignified atmosphere. It’s one thing to be the top of the ane-sama ranking while she was a 2nd year. Seeing her upset and walking in a hurry raised a commotion for both genders.

She underwent a terrible ordeal when her first confession was delivered (and failed). That’s why she was strict and rebuked him for a while but...

(He is the kind of guy that when you attack him with your all, at the next day

he would come and carefreely say ‘Sorry~’ for some unknown reason. He’s a tough one. There’s no way he would do something like this just because I am sulking.)

The way a person sulks varies. But she kept her sulking to a margin that took Misumi in mind. And so, she decided to not pursue the topic anymore. She would stop all this sulking and tell him that she has accepted it.

In fact, that day was also an important day for someone other than Higashi Yukari.

Well, it wasn’t that big of a change, but the two changed ‘Ane-samas’ were honestly pushing the club members into fear. It was as if they were in the eye of the storm, and while imagining that it had something to do with Makoto, they were unable to actually ask about the reason of it. This may be digressing a bit, but considering that Makoto was able to interact with those fear instilling existences, their evaluation of him increased by another step.

“Hey hey, just what in the world happened with Higashi-san?”

“Eh? You don’t know? It’s about Misumi Makoto-kun.”

“The one that became a vice-captain?”

The female students that gathered around the window were curious about the state of Higashi, and were talking secretly with a friend of hers.

“ That’s right. That guy, it seems that he worked hard and became the vice captain.”

“Yeah, yeah.”

“It seems he misunderstood something, and after that, he confessed to Higashi-san and was rejected.”

“Eeeeeee!”

“And then, for a while, they were acting as if nothing happened.

” ... Oh, so that’s what was happening.”

Understanding what was said, the girl who asked the question said ‘So, that’s why’. What she was referring to was, of course, the matter of Makoto’s

transfer.

“That’s how it is. There’s rumors saying that he threw away the matter of the archery club and ran away.”

“Ugh, how evil. Still, it’s pretty amazing to escape to another country.”

It was actually another world. So it was even more amazing.

Throughout history women’s secret talk is secret, and at the same time, not really secret at all..This time as well, it reached the ears of several girls that were passing by.

Shing!

It was as if that sound effect came out from those sharp gazes, and they were directed at the female students.

“Oh, that ...”

The two had only been together for a few moment, but created such a stir. However, Higashi’s glare made them stop.

(He didn’t do his best to become a vice-captain! I was the one who was so insecure that went crying to him to become a vice-captain! ! Also, Makoto wasn’t the one who confessed, it was me... I was the one who was dumped!!)

While surprised that all the facts had been completely reversed, Higashi wanted to correct them, but her words couldn’t come out properly. ‘The one who fell in love was me’, if she were to confess, she was sure that he would accept it.

... That’s right. She ‘is’ in love. Not only Higashi, Makoto thinks he has already cut all ties with this world, however, in reality, Higashi was still thinking about him. Inside of her heart, he still remains in a vague form.

With just a gaze and no words, the room became quiet. If they continued to speak, they would be made to regret their secret talk.

“Hey, Higashi. Let’s go. Club activities are going to start soon. The captain shouldn’t be late, right?”

‘It is fine to go now’ is what he signaled to the 2 frightened students from the

same year. Both of them lowered their head and left quickly. Higashi quietly sighed.

“I’m sorry, thank you Hyodo.”

The look on the girl that began to walk once again, felt as if she had lost a portion of her sharpness. She must have arranged her feelings a bit.

“No, it’s okay. It was sudden, so I can understand that you’re agitated.”

The man called Hyodo was also agitated by this. No one knew a man could have been captain in a position traditionally filled by a woman, even he thought Makoto was good enough to be the next captain, filling his position was an important role.

In terms of leadership, Makoto properly looks at his surroundings. He also never missed practice, has bought club equipment and cleaned the dojo, without a single face of displeasure. Thanks to him, the club’s atmosphere was definitely heading in a good direction.

The only complain they would have of him would be that he didn’t enter any tournaments and matches. And hearing the advisor and the instructor that came to coach, it seems that was not out of his will, but their own decision after seeing his abilities. At first they doubted their ears, but they actually did think that he was better than anyone there. His guidance was better than anyone else, so there’s no way someone that can give such good advice would be bad. There’s no doubts that this year’s newcomers will be leaving the best results out of all their history.

“Hey, about what those girls were talking about...”

“Oh, ...that.”

Surprised that Higashi herself began talking about the topic, he gives a response back. She is also a concerned party. He was considering her feelings and was minding not to touch that topic.

“How did it become such a story?”

The question that sounded like it was filled with regret surprised Hyodo. He was actually thinking that way too. Leaving aside the part about transferring, he

honestly thought that Makoto was the one who was rejected. Because it was true that she was being strict with him after all.

Walking through the halls, the amount of people around decreased. That's because the archery field is far from the main building and field.

"No, there was a period when Higashi was extremely strict with Makoto right? So that's probably how everyone thought. That maybe Makoto did something to you."

"And how did that something become confessing?"

"Well, I do think that part is unjust suspicion. But in the club there aren't many girls who talk like that, so I don't think they were the ones who spread it. Maybe it was some girl in another club or another class."

"Hah~ they really do have time to spare huh."

Higashi Yukari seems considerably amazed. She doesn't find rumors interesting, so there's no surprise that she thinks of this as incredibly pointless.

"You know we are... prone to attention after all."

"Attention? Why?"

The captain makes a face as if she truly didn't know what he was talking about and asked Hyodo. She is the captain of the archery club, which means that every small action she makes erupts into gossip, and yet, she is saying such an apathetic thing.

"No, well, you see...."

"It really doesn't sit right. But even if they are so free, you can't underestimate them. They actually were close to the truth."

"Eh?!"

"What's with that face, didn't you think it wasn't far from the truth too??"

"Uh..."

She hit the mark. He didn't see it himself, but there was something he was sure of after looking back at the situation.

"I don't care about what other people think, but if misunderstandings remain

inside the club, it would be upsetting. Fine, I will tell you what really happened. You tell the boys on my behalf.”

She will speak to the girls herself, is what Higashi Yukari implied without saying.

“Is it okay for me to know!?”

“Of course. I have already gotten over it. Also, I will be using this information to my advantage, so it is fine.”

“B-But you said it was close to the truth. Then, did it really happen!?”

“You know, it was a~ll reversed”

“Huh, reversed?”

“In truth, I was the one that asked Makoto to become the vice-captain. Or more like, I asked him to be the captain, but he instead convinced me to become the captain. After being convinced, I asked him to become the vice-captain.”

“Eeeeeh?!”

“And then, going with the flow, I ended up confessing. To him.”

“?!!! Confessed?”

“Yes.”

“And then... what happened?”

“I was rejected. That’s all.”

“!!!!”

“This is the truth, I don’t know how it turned into him being the one that confessed, but the part about the confession really did hit the mark.”

Hyodo was so shocked by all this that his mouth was flapping. For Higashi Yukari to rely on a man... moreover, she even confessed. It was something that he couldn’t digest immediately.

Both male and female students fell for her. There are many who confess their love for her regardless of gender. She had discarded and rejected every

confession in a single sweep. And for her to confess to Makoto, whose only good trait is being attentive, it was shocking. He even felt that just this one word wasn't enough to convey his current feelings.

Moreover, he had rejected the archery captain Higashi Azuma.

Heck, how many people would refuse a confession from her in Nakatsuhara high school? Hyodo couldn't think of any. What if it was himself? He would have accepted immediately. He is also one of the people that admires her after all. It might even apply to the female students.

He somehow tries to think with his currently jumbled mind. That he is glad Makoto is not here anymore. If he were still here, he would have turned more than half of the students in this school into enemies, and there's no doubt that he would be exposed to violence. And probably, Hyodo would have been one of them, is what he added.

"If someone confesses to me again, I will tell them: 'Sorry, I like Misumi Makoto.'"

No, Hyodo reconsidered, Makoto would have died... And then, with his still jumbled mind, he began to feel respect for the actions of Misumi Makoto. If someone were to tell him Makoto is a psychic right now, he would believe it.

"This Christmas, I wonder if I'll storm Vaduz."

She had said so jokingly, but her eyes looked serious from what Hyodo could see.

Extra Story II - At that time, Modern day ②

"I am sorry, I like someone else so I can't go out with you."

This year also, I wonder how many times it has already been, this honorable certain-death line was quietly said.

The person who refused is the girl. Although the boy is wearing a blazer type uniform, she had an attire that gave a different atmosphere.

White dougi and black horse riding hakama (Umanori Hakama). It was a common appearance for archery.

The height of the boy that asked her out is around 175 cm, she is around the same height. It's a height where their eyes can look straight at each other. The girl will definitely be taller if she wears heels.

Also, her attire was a bit disarranged, but that doesn't mean she is a disorderly person. It's because of her tall figure and her extra large breasts. Even when she is wearing formal Japanese clothes, those breasts still showed their beautiful presence.

One can see a boy that doesn't have any energy left to call out the girl that left, and has a face like it's the end of the world as he sees her off.

On the slightly wet right sleeve of the dougi is an embroidery for "Hasegawa".

"Good work~, you turned down someone again huh~"

"Haruko, enough with the counting, I did ask to stop right?"

Another person, a girl also in archery clothes, appeared from the road Hasegawa came. Nakatsuhara High school's archery field is on the back of the school building, it stands on the highest hill. She sprang from a tree on the sideway on the way home.

"Even if you said so~, a girl that joins archery club in the wrong season, shoots down Ibuki-senpai's confession and shows the ability to cut down all male students that come to confess their feelings one after the other"

The girl with a notebook on one hand says all this in one breath excitedly and laughs. It's charming. There are many beauties in the archery club. There are also many who are cute as a small animal just like her. Of course, there are also

model type girls like Hasegawa.

High school archery, how fearsome.

"Since it has come to this, I have to collect data on this. Subject investigation is the basic, ba-si-c."

Unfortunately in her case, her personality doesn't match at all with her looks. She is the type that is regrettable when she opens her mouth. It's not wrong to compare her with a cute chihuahua with venomous tongue.

"Since it has come to this, you say? Please spare me from that. I refuse to become a topical person for your own convenience, okay!?"

"But hey, who is the most confessed to girl in the whole school right now?! It is necessary for the creation of the ranking: 'If you confess to this girl, you will be a hero', please be patient until we finish tallying the votes♪"

Hasegawa... No, Hasegawa Nukumi sighs from the bottom of her heart. Although she really wants to confront her about that incomprehensible ranking she made, the results probably won't change even if she heard the answer.

If it's announced, the situation could be worse than now. She expects that it will surely worsen.

She thinks that if the other person is serious with their confession, then she should also seriously respond. But if they come for some nonsense like testing their courage to be considered heroes, she doesn't want to be part of it.

"....If I receive harm because of that ranking, I will expose that you are involved in the creation of it, Haruko."

"Currently, Nukumin and the club president are the favourites, it's a competition between you two~ huh... eh, ehhhhh?! Exposing a reporter's information is foul play. It's violation of freedom of press! Even if you do know, please at least leave it as reporter A or something like word-of-mouth!"

Due to the nature of the ranking this time, there are quite a lot of names from the archery club members. Being given criminal treatment when she is enrolled in the club herself would be extremely bad. Reporter Haruko that hoped for freedom of press panicked. Forget about looking for excuses, Haruko is actually the very mastermind so she is really the true culprit.

Hasegawa's counterattack was really effective.

"The people placed in that incomprehensible ranking have human rights too! In the first place, aren't you a first year too, Haruko? You haven't been able to properly hit the target yet, so don't go skipping club activity!"

"Muu, to let out my eternal problem like this, Nukumin has gotten quite skilfull in her words huh, yoyoyo."

"After half a year associating with you, of course I am getting used to it. Anyway, go back to the dojo, Haruko."

"... From the moment you said you were going to join, I always thought about it. Nukumin is too serious~"

Haruko, who has a troubled expression as if she was a cat gripped by the nape of the neck, grumbled. It's unknown whether the ranking creation was stopped or just temporarily suspended though.

"Even on the new club member greeting, you actually took what I said seriously and declared that you had a boyfriend"

"Don't say anything about that anymore..."

Nukumi holds her forehead. For some reason, the arm peeking out from her robe showed off her sensuality.

(Wa. Her gesture is lady-like. If she unconsciously lets out so much sex appeal, of course she will be confessed to~ As expected, she already has a man?)

Recently, the growth of Hasegawa Nukumi's femininity and sex appeal's is somewhat amazing. Is what Haruko thought. The number one reason for that is a boy, she guesses.

"Also about that talk of hitting the target... it was totally similar to how Misumi-senpai talks. Now that I think of it! I heard that senpai suddenly decided to study abroad! It's a lifetime's mistake~. I also never heard of the destination."

Haruka is regretting because he is a valuable information source.

"...It's Liechtenstein."

“Heh? Lieche?”

“It’s nothing. Let’s go.”

Hasegawa’s body stiffened at the change of subject, but Haruko Yanase’s, whose ambition is to become a journalist, did not realize it. She is still an amateur. By the way, she is a small person. If she and Hasegawa face each other, it would be like she is talking to Hasegawa’s chest.

Hasegawa’s facial expression was hidden by her height, and she might have to be thankful for it. Because if Haruko saw her face, she would have surely realized it.

“Hasegawa-san, did you finish your errand?”

Just before entering the dojo, a voice called her from the side.

“Club president Higashi. I am really sorry. I ended up coming late to practice.”

She lowers her head. The person that calls her is the new club president, Higashi Yukari. Because she was called to a confession, she told the club president beforehand that she will be late because of a class errand.

Honestly, it would better if she met her after she changed clothes, it can't be helped that she meets her in her dougi just like that. Haruko who is in the same grade also stands out, so she was noticed as well.

It seems Higashi Yukari just got back from drinking water.

"Ara, Yanase-san is also together with you?"

"Eh, yes~ that's right! I also helped!"

Hasegawa is amazed and gives a bitter smile at Haruko's knack for this kind of things.

"I see. Then both of you, let's go."

"Yes!"

Immediately, senpai reduces her walking speed to walk next to Yanase. Higashi Yukari brought her face close to Yanase's ear without changing her smiling expression and whispers something.

Haruko opens her eyes wide and big, dripping with cold sweat to the point that it felt as if it would let out sound effects. Her face turned pale. Her appearance looks like a cat that was surprised by a loud sound.

Hasegawa wonders what was going on and tried to look at Yukari's face, but she still can't infer the contents of what was whispered.

"Don't overdo it, ok?"

Saying so, Higashi Yukari went back to the dojo without the first years.

"Hasegawa-chan, let's go back together."

"Ibuki-senpai."

With smiling face, a man approaches Hasegawa while she was wiping up her sweat. One foot taller than a normal Japanese person and natural light chestnut hair. Only his face indicates that he is Japanese.

Even if people exaggerate saying that he belongs to the entertainment industry almost everyone would believe it.

His name is Masamune Ibuki. Nakatsuhara high school second year, an archery club member, and second place in the latest school test rankings in his grade. It can be said that he is a highest ranked superhuman.

But in Ibuki's case, he is a celebrity whose name is often talked about mainly because of his love affairs.

Whatever about it. If you want to take him it's okay, If he is taken it's also okay. If he enjoys it then it's okay. He is a hedonist.

He is a man that prefers enjoying love affairs with everyone, rather than spending time nurturing love. He is someone that is thought of as a nuisance by other boys.

It's recently become a very common sight at the archery club. Ibuki's most recent obsession was the first year newcomer, Hasegawa Nukumi.

Even though he said: "I was firmly rejected", his will did not get blown away by the wind, and has not stopped approaches towards the said kouhai.

An admirable spirit.

"If you don't have any plans, it's okay, right?"

"Senpai is the one that seems to have plans though"

"... Ahaha."

Nukumi says redolent words as she glances at several female students.

"I don't want to be one of senpai's girlfriends"

"Hasegawa-chan, Ibuki-senpai's quality is that he doesn't give up"

"Hasegawa's quality is that she wants to be serious with only one."

She exchanged words with senpai like she is accustomed to it. Her interactions with Haruko might have helped in part in getting accustomed to the conversations with Ibuki. If it was her past self, her face would be red in confusion.

"Yah~, I am troubled. But Hasegawa-chan really has changed huh~ I thought you were in a bad mood for a while, but you suddenly matured. Did something happen?"

"Who knows, I don't really know about it myself."

"Really~? Somehow I think I know who is the one responsible for that, but I don't think that it is good to get so affected by it, you know?"

"You can tell... huh. Then, you should have also noticed that I hate this right? Except for the first confession, I thought you were keeping me in check in all the other confessions"

Hearing the 'check' word, the friendly smile drops from Ibuki's face. He was barely able to reform his smile.

".....You are really sharp huh. But that's not the only reason I confessed to you multiple times. I am quite serious for Nukumi..."

Masamune who changed to a serious expression called Hasegawa with her first name. But, those words weren't tied until the end.

"Ibuki-senpai....I think at most I can only take friendship. I will not become one of senpai's lovers. So please excuse me. Thank you for your hard work."

Ibuki sees off the back of the kouhai entering the locker room.

(Good grief, to think that the first woman i really think of is holding an unrequited love towards a friend of mine. I guess I also got fried. It's cool to just brush it off and watch over it, but to be completely seen through when I was confessing over and over, it's embarrassing)

He stretched his arm to stop her, but it stays idle in place. Without any other choice, he reluctantly takes his hand to the back of his head and scratches it. As

if representing his inability to act on his own feelings.

"Ibuki~ The girls are tired of waiting. Quickly change your clothes and leave."

"On my way."

It can be seen that he is popular with the opposite sex because there are many girls waiting outside the dojo. But there are no archery club members included.

His reputation that is well known inside the club is one of the reasons, but there's also the simple and surprising fact that he doesn't interact much with the club members of the opposite sex.

The reason is extremely simple. Because he excels in appearance and studies, nevertheless he likes to entertain women with plenty of topics and that is why he is popular with women.

But the archery club also has different boys that have the same qualities as him.

Because of this, even when he has this many qualities, the girls don't think of him as faithful (in an earnest meaning), and it's recognized as a fault of him. Leaving aside if it is acceptable, he has a reason as to why he goes out with several girls at once. But if people don't understand that reason, there's no point.

(That Makoto, how exactly did he conquer both Higashi and Hasegawa? Good grief, if I lost in both there and archery, I won't have any standing left.)

The boy named Misumi Makoto didn't plan this at all. Or rather something like a woman's heart, maybe he is dense because of his thoughtless sisters.

The words: 'Not only at archery' denoted that Ibuki thought of Makoto as a worthy rival. But it's just one sided feeling from Ibuki.

He has seen Makoto shooting the bow several times. And when Ibuki saw this, for the first time he thought of someone's skills as god-like.

Far superior technique, it's not weird to compare those skills to that of a god or devil. For the first time, Ibuki Masamune thought of Misumi Makoto's skill to be in the domain of gods.

Since then, it's certainly because of him recognizing those skills as god-like that his hurdle of god-like things went up. Once something has been recognized, he was unable to accept anything else to be of the same level.

That's why he got interested in the person that had her heart taken by Makoto, and he splendidly fell in love with her.

(Naa Makoto. Higashi is good, Hasegawa is good. Aren't both of them great women? You really have to come back sometime. The dutiful you disappeared, so I know it's not just a simple matter. But you know, something happened with those two right? If that is so, then at least settle those matters first. I will do my best to keep strange insects away from those girls so.....Damn it, I got the total loser role. Even though I am confident I have the specs of an MC. My family is quite rich, and my face, stature, and style are also excellent, my single digit ranking in grades has also never fallen, versatile in sports, plus I am also plentiful in topics and am popular with both boys and girls~ No matter how you look, I am an MC, right?)

Certainly, Masamune Ibuki's frightening spec can be boasted about. It's not wrong if you make a graph with perfect scores for it. It's a fact that his total competency far exceeded Makoto... It's different if it's a talk if he can become MC or not.

Misumi Makoto is specialized in one point. In terms of skills, the only one that can be brought in numerical numbers and be able to boast about would be his

archery ability. If his ability was presented in a radar chart and you try to match it with the strongest, the result of that graphic would be a perfect line-up. His specialization was on another level.

If you try to find Makoto's good points, perhaps Makoto is more of a pity.

Masamune Ibuki solidified his resolve to watch over the love of his friend who is considered a hero. That determination won't be known to anyone else, and his way of acting friendly towards the girls that have been waiting for him has not changed since his admission.

Extra Story III - A certain day... ①

What is written here is only one portion of it. The really dark parts have been diligently erased (by my master and Aniki)!

I did everything including murder until I got tired of it and, well, now I've calmed down.

I've married my daughter off and given my name as a congratulatory gift to her husband.

I wonder if I've reached the point where my fire is fading. I have more power than I know what to do with, but the occasions on which I use it to my heart's content are growing less frequent.

This is just my opinion.

But I think that going wild and doing as one pleases is best done while one is still young.

It's no good if a person who's lived a quiet life suddenly raises his spirits and goes wild after getting old.

Regarding that point, I think what Aneki and I did falls under the category of "trouble we caused when we were young." Now, I find drinking tea on the balcony to be calming. We used to get into big fights and drive each other out of our homes, but now we get along well.

However.

That's not the case with my Aniki.

He's been quiet since forever ago. He did the work our parents told him to do diligently, and responded to any requests made of him with a smile. I caused trouble for him, but we never got into a fight. He probably still has the scar on his back from the time I slashed him diagonally from the shoulder, and the one on his stomach from the time I stabbed him.

He's a staunch, quiet person.

When I abandoned my work, he would do it in my stead, and when Aneki

confined herself indoors, he went to visit her.

Even now, the many diplomatic relations that Aneki finds to be troublesome are managed by Aniki. Well, they were.

He started doing as he pleased.

Aniki finally started doing whatever he wanted.

He rushed over to my place with an expression as if he were about to die, said something like "I'll leave the rest to you!" and disappeared as quickly as he'd arrived.

I have no clue what exactly he was planning to leave to me, but this was the first time that Aniki had ever requested anything from me.

I've caused him nothing but trouble.

With the intention of taking over whatever Aniki was leaving to me, I'm now going around asking people to try and find out where he's gone. It's not like I've run away because Aniki's sudden disappearance has caused an enormous amount of work to pour onto me like a waterfall, alright?

... The door of the room that Aneki had secluded herself in has been destroyed by the retainers with colorless eyes, huh. You caused trouble for him too, Aneki. Take charge of some of Aniki's work (including my share).

I've asked my acquaintances all around the world and searched and searched, and finally discovered Aniki's whereabouts, I mean, where he is.

He's in a bit of an unusual place. It's not a metaphor to say that he's disappeared. He literally faded away so I thought something had happened; this might be quite a serious matter. It's making my blood boil a little like it used to.

In a way, this is Mom's territory. But when I contacted her, thinking that I'd talk to her before I leave, she told me "He's not in a state where he can talk so there's no point in coming here."

I did have a photo emailed to me and she's right. He doesn't have a person's body. The image is just of a faintly shining mist. In other words, this is Aniki right now.

Aniki's presence was meager to begin with, and now he's turned into this

photochemical smog. He can only be recognized as a contribution to the world's pollution.

The email did say that his consciousness itself is fine, somewhere deep inside (she is his mother after all, so it seems that she's done some research out of worry) so I've decided to use dream communication to hear what he has to say.

I took my concerns to the Moru Assistants, my friends in the Mediterranean Sea, but they started shouting something about privacy. So I had to try to convince them with my fists and that failed. They said something about a mixer party with eyes that showed no signs of yielding, so I decided to retreat. Them mentioning privacy when they went together to peep caused me to ready my fists without thinking, but then they mentioned women. If that's the case, they should've just said so.

That guy, he was starving that badly, huh. I'll introduce him to some girls next time. Since he's going to have no success tonight. And get beaten viciously.

This is a problem.

With that being the case, I have no friends involved in this sort of thing. I do have some acquaintances, but it seems they're too scared of me; it's quite difficult to meet them.

I have no choice. This isn't a situation I where I can just stay quiet without complaining. If I don't get a grasp of the situation and go to Aneki's place as well, I'm going to fail in a variety of ways.

I guess I'll look for him. As I decided on that and was about to return to the country, someone visited me.

To visit my house just before I was about to leave it, what good timing — I mean, bad timing. I don't have time to deal with him now so I'll have to see him next time.

"Sorry about that. It's unusual for someone to be standing... What are you doing?!"(Susanoo) A strange sight greeted me as I opened the entrance.

One person is my close friend. Yama-chan.

The other person is the exact person that I've been looking for. But with

Yama-chan embracing him passionately, his face is completely pale.

"I've got a rough idea of the situation. This gentleman is the one who went missing and you're looking for him, right?"(Yama) "Well, that's right. Information travels fast, huh."(Susanoo)

It's only been half a day since I sent the Moru Assistants to the hospital.

"Ow, ow, ow, ow, p-please let go of me~ Kyuh..."

It seems the embrace was a little too passionate; his pale face turned just a little purple and he fainted. He was groaning earlier, so I guess it's to be expected. This guy isn't a fighter.

"If you want to thank the person who found him, leave that to me. I'll leave this to you. Take care of this gentleman!"(Yama) With that, Yama-chan turns her back.

"What the hell, since you're here, why don't we go together?"(Susanoo)
"That's unnecessary. I'm going to go and help with some work that's not being tended to."(Yama) Saying that, Yama-chan leaves.

W-what a brave person. It looks like she's obviously just trying to gain points, but she's good. The speed with which she got her information was kind of stalker-ish, but ignoring that, she's the best.

Well then, I don't have to search anymore. I guess I'll go and hear what Aniki has to say.

"And that's how it is."

"So that's why you did something that crazy... Ah, this is a present from my wife."(Susanoo) "Oh, this is the pipe leaf that I love. As expected of the lady, she is well-informed. Well then, should I suppose I should prepare some tea."

After hearing about the situation, I give the present that I'd forgotten about to Aniki.

The present that the wife made me carry is apparently something that Aniki likes. She's such an attentive wife, really.

"Ah, it's fine."(Susanoo)

Aniki has been lying down on his futon in this dream, and as he goes to stand up, I quickly stop him. To think that he's become so weak that he needs to rest even in his dream; he doesn't change, this Aniki of mine.

"Oi, Yumene. You make the tea. Enough for three people."(Susanoo)

"Eh?! M-me? I understand!"(Yumene)

As I call out to him suddenly, Yumene lets out an unsettling voice and quickly stands up and disappears.

"Sorry about that~"(Tsukuyomi)

"It's fine, don't stay stuff like that. That Yumene, he runs when he sees me. I don't even know if I'd have been able to come if Yama-chan didn't help me out."(Susanoo) "I see. I made even that girl worry, huh. I'm starting to feel more and more guilty."(Tsukuyomi) "She was kinda happy and said she'll help out with the work that you left, Aniki."(Susanoo) I owe her for helping me. I won't mention anything about your stalker-like tendencies next time, Yama-chan.

"I have to thank her when I recover."(Tsukuyomi)

"Yeah. Bow your head to everyone."(Susanoo)

I wonder if Aniki knows just how much trouble he's caused by disappearing. The bad thing about him is that he has no self-awareness.

To make a comparison, it's like if a nine-to-five worker who's never worked overtime was suddenly put on a day-and-night work schedule. With no increase in staff.

"But when it comes to my work, unlike yours or Nee-san's, there should be plenty who could substitute for me. Is it that much of a problem?"(Tsukuyomi) He doesn't get it.

He really doesn't get it, this Aniki.

Indeed, Aniki's work isn't the kind that he's the only one who's able to do it; anyone could substitute for him for a lot of his work. But that's not the problem.

It's the quantity.

Aniki is the only one who can handle that quantity of work. He's a superhuman. There are definitely more than twenty-four hours in a day for Aniki.

Now that I think about it, both me and Aneki were inexperienced.

There were plenty of intelligent creatures at that time. Humans being the main ones.

During the night that Aniki is in charge of, humans sleep. And humans don't live in the sea. So in short, I thought it was easy.

However, intelligent creatures aren't the only ones that move the world forward. We didn't know that.

Everything in the world is closely connected in co-existence.

Watching over the numerous humans as well as the environment and problems that surrounded them.

Controlling the entirety of the vast oceans, and even linking its circulation and benefits to the land's surface.

Comparing the two, my job was far simpler, and it was also stimulating and interesting.

My brother did the other job all by himself. Even while having his ability questioned by others who thought that it was a simple job that anyone could do. Even though it was the most difficult, tedious and boring job.

Even with the abnormal number of petitions and documents that are arriving now, it's nothing compared to the volume of work Aniki did back then. Because since then, he's worked frantically to create a system that automates a lot of his work.

That's why Aniki says that his work is easy now. How miserable.

"... Aniki, you're amazing, huh."(Susanoo)

"What is it all of a sudden?"(Tsukuyomi)

"No, you're really amazing."(Susanoo)

On top of all that, he even covered for me and Aneki. And he even saved

various fallen people by talking to Mother.

Not that he has a personality of wanting to govern over something or make miracles happen.

Aniki is an incredible person.

Hmm? So this means?

"Though you are my younger brother, you are a mystery to me. Well, good work for coming here even without me saying anything. Sorry, but regarding that girl, please consult other people to work out a plan." (Tsukuyomi) "Hmm, yeah. Of course. On the other side, the Moru Assistants are helping me out, so I'll be fine. Hey, Aniki." (Susanoo) I decided to ask a question that just suddenly occurred to me.

"Hmm?" (Tsukuyomi)

"About the human you said you bestowed power on." (Susanoo)

The fact that Aniki would bestow a power on one particular human is surprising on its own.

Aniki has been the helpful type ever since he was born. He helps someone and is helped by others.

"Mhmm." (Tsukuyomi)

"Between abilities or power, which did you give him?" (Susanoo)

There are three ways to bestow power on a human.

One is to give him a "completed" ability, so to speak.

Another is to awaken an ability that the human has innately.

The last is to bestow what is called a Sacred Treasure on him. This has nothing to do with this case, though.

"I gave him a power." (Tsukuyomi)

As I thought. If that's the case. For the first time, the divine power that performs best with connections to other people has been granted to a human. That sounds quite interesting. I was asked to do something about it, but I guess it's not a problem if I just leave it alone.

But right now, Aniki is frail. That's because he forcibly interfered with another world.

"Of course you'll lose your body, interfering with another world after doing that. You pushed yourself too much."(Susanoo) "No, no, it's because I bestowed more power than I had intended to. I bestowed enough to fill him, and then I had found that I had become considerably weak. I underestimated the toll that interfering in another world would take, and it went poorly~"(Tsukuyomi) "... More than you had intended to, huh. You mean a human that interesting was living in our world?"(Susanoo) I examine Aniki, trying to feel him out.

"Indeed. He's interesting in a variety of ways."(Tsukuyomi)

"Here's the tea, sorry about the wait!"(Yumene)

Damn Yumene, just when I'd thought to try and figure out Aniki's intentions. What bad timing.

"Oh, Yumene. Sorry about that. Thanks for the tea."(Tsukuyomi)

Aniki raises half of his body up and doesn't seem to have any interest in answering my questions anymore. He's happily eating some snacks now.

However.

It'll take a considerable amount of time for Aniki to return. If we let nature take its course, it'll take several hundred years. Even if we do everything we can... about a hundred years.

Depending on how we take care of the work that Aniki's asked me to do, I might end up being crushed to death by the workload.

... Several people in Takamagahara might die of overwork.

TLN: Takamagahara is where the gods live in Shinto mythology

Well, it's the first time Aniki's relying on me. I'll give it my best!

And so I, Susanoo, finish my visit to Aniki and begin to deal with things, holding some interest in this human that's gone to another world.

Note from the author:

This chapter happened in the world of the gods.

The characters were Susanoo, Tsukuyomi, Aneki as well as the Moru Assistants, Yama-chan and Yumene. If you know them, that's great, and if not, then that's fine as well.

Actually, if you knew them all, I'd be worried.

Will the next chapter be the fourth extra chapter, or the main story?

I'm eager to hear your impressions and opinions.

Final TLN: I'm not 100% sure on the pronunciation of Yumene's name. There aren't any hard rules on how Japanese names are pronounced; many names with the same kanji can be pronounced in many different ways and many names can't even be pronounced unless the phonetic reading is given. I've gone with a result I found on Google. Alternatively it may be pronounced as Yumefuku, Mufuku, Boufuku, or Mune, Boune... or something else. I don't know.

Extra Story IV - The other world at that time

There are two humans at the shrine*.

TLN*: The word here is 神社/hokora, which refers to those very small shrines found on the side of footpaths/streets. You can google “hokora” if you don’t know what I’m talking about.

It is a secluded region among secluded regions, with no signs at all of anyone else’s presence. In front of a cave that was made by digging out the insides of a mountain. There is a shrine inside a dome-shaped space that resembles a crater in the sky.

A man and a woman. Their faces express happiness and a sense of accomplishment that they couldn’t conceal even if they wanted to.

Upon becoming adults, they registered at the Adventurers’ Guild long, long after ordinary people knock on those gates.

Unless they have very exceptional circumstances, most people who normally register for the guilds do so from the age of ten. Exceptional circumstances would be such as for royalty, nobles whose occupation within their country would be determined at an early age or sometimes even for successors to large companies.

Children living in the villages or cities treasure the specially-designed cards and comparing their own levels recorded on the cards is fun for them. In most cases, children only hunt small animals until they safely reach level 10.

From about level 15 onwards, they would need to put themselves in danger and face monsters, so it is difficult for children to advance further on their own. And so it is common for them to pursue other interests and take up other work once they become aware of how dangerous and tedious it is to increase their level further.

But these two are different. Their background falls into the category of the aforementioned “exceptional circumstances”; they didn’t register themselves at the guild until they were eighteen years of age.

At first, they found it difficult to even take on small, weak monsters. They showed no sign of any particular talent. Still, even as the people around them disappeared and were replaced with others, they remained active adventurers.

They accepted requests enthusiastically and as they switched locations and persevered, they found that the people around them viewed them not with contempt, but respect and trust. They were veterans that put their experience to use in place of talent. Their pupils that shone with an unwavering, strong will were valued highly in a different way to the geniuses that simply vanished one by one.

The man at this shrine is level 321, while the woman is level 301.

These are high levels to reach for those without the talent for combat. No, this may even be the peak for such people. They have no titles, special characteristics or unique skills. They have no legendary sword blessed with good fortune or one-of-a-kind magical grimoire. They have only one thing. A firm objective. Everything associated with their rapid growth had been for that one objective.

"Goddess, we have completed the final trial!"(Man)

The man calls out to the shrine in a loud voice. Indeed, this shrine is not for a mere spirit, but a deity. It is a place for communicating with a goddess.

The two of them hold their breath anxiously as they watch a golden light gathering at the shrine.

As the light shines brightly, the goddess suddenly appears.

A blonde girl is sitting on the shrine's stone steps. Her pupils are deep green and her golden hair exudes a magnificence that couldn't possibly be matched by any mortal.

Her white, clay-like skin gives the feeling that looking at her would be breaking an inviolable taboo. Her lips, fingertips and everything else about her contribute to an absolutely perfect beauty.

She remains silently seated with a displeased expression.

"This was the last of the twelve trials, wasn't it?"(Woman)

The woman speaks. Not put off by the goddess's unhappy look, she asks her for confirmation.

"... Yes, I suppose so."(Goddess)

"Then you will grant our wish, won't you?!"(Man)

The man makes a second confirmation.

A wish.

Indeed, the two made a wish upon this deity. The goddess gave twelve trials to this pair that wanted their wish granted. They were twelve substantially difficult trials. The goddess had not imagined for a moment that they would actually clear them.

Gods cannot go back on agreements made with those under their protection. This is one of the numerous unwritten laws that have been implicitly agreed upon. It is not impossible to break, but ignoring their request or changing her mind would bring about an inconvenient situation.

"Kanart Io, Cass Tort, your wish has not changed? You two have overcome all the trials that I have given to you. This is a remarkable accomplishment. I will grant you any kind of wish."(Goddess)

The goddess begins the discussion and lists the various wishes that she is able to grant such as immortality, unmatched beauty, the royal throne, any kind of sacred treasure — the material objects that one may desire and the miracles that she can make happen.

However, despite the fact that they will certainly never have another opportunity like this, they do not change their minds despite the goddess's various suggestions.

"No, it hasn't changed."

This is what they tell her.

"Why is that? Your wish is for the two of you to become happy, is it not? If that is the case, I can alter the memories of everyone around you to make everything proceed smoothly. Even your previous wish."(Goddess)

"Goddess-sama, there would be no meaning in doing such a thing. Not having

any blessings at all would be better than receiving false blessings from those around us."(Cass)

As if the woman expected the goddess to say such words, she rejects her suggestion once more.

"Then I can simply make it as if the cause of your problems never existed. That demon will have never existed in the first place. I will erase him for you right away; if I do that, you two can go and meet the future you desire with no obstacles. What started it all was the fact that I was not aware of his actions." (Goddess)

"It is indeed I who loved him. But the future that we desire, Goddess-sama, is the one that that will come after you grant our wish exactly as we have made it."(Cass)

"It's just as Cass says. I, no, we became like this because we were supposed to. We will become separate from this world altogether and carry out our will." (Kanart)

"I did warn you from the start, didn't I? That you might die."(Goddess)

"That is not a problem."(Kanart)

"Even if you were to successfully and safely complete the transfer, you will never be able to come back, you know? A hyuman's body will not last through a second transfer."(Goddess)

"We have taken that into consideration."(Kanart)

"That place, unlike here, is a place where even the blessings of gods do not exist, let alone magic, you know? Your prayers will never be heard."(Goddess)

"Yes."(Kanart)

"It is a place where the language and even the people's appearance will be different, you know?!"(Goddess)

"We are prepared."(Kanart)

With that final exchange of words, the goddess glares at the pair of hyumans.

Why are they so dissatisfied? She cannot understand their way of thinking at

all.

Born in the satellite nation of Elysion, raised as a nobleman. A man whose succession to a high political position had already been secured.

A woman born in the same country who rose to a high social status as one of Elysion's priestesses.

The two of them met during a religious function and came to love one another.

They had a happy wedding accepted by those around them and spent their lives together — or at least, they were supposed to.

The goddess had known that the demons were making strange movements, but she cannot be expected to keep up with every single one. They were under her protection as well, and she had created them in the first place.

That backfired on her.

It started with the small miss, the kind that would simply become a funny story to tell later. Taking an opportunity so small it cannot even be called an opportunity, a demon proficient in love affairs approached the woman skillfully.

The woman had not associated herself with any men other than the man that she was betrothed to. The fact that her new partner belonged to a race denied by her religion only served to fuel her passion; she adored him deeply. And thus, everything began to fall apart.

Her adultery with a demon went against the things that she had been taught and was an immoral act towards her fiancé.

When both families discovered this, her engagement with the man was broken off and she was banished from Elysion. Right before her eyes, the demon man revealed numerous things about the woman that the man she had been engaged to could not bear to hear, and then died.

These circumstances became widely known to many people associated with them, and of course, the relationship between the two was torn apart.

The goddess thought about these two. She considered the unhappy incident that had occurred in the royal court, and concerned herself with the affairs of

Kanart and Cass.

But perhaps around the time that she decided use some tricks to have them find new lovers, Kanart and Cass eloped from the country.

Kanart loved Cass. Even though another man had taken her away from him. Despite everything, he loved her and loved her. No matter what it took, regardless of the sacrifices he had to make, he wanted to be married to Cass Tort.

Cass had certainly once loved the demon, but she still desired Kanart. Suffering in regret, she had fallen in love with Kanart when he proposed to her a second time after the demon's death.

The two of them were happy with that. The whole affair may have been nothing but a dog's bite for them*. However, one of them was a nobleman who was supposed to be the successor to an important position within the country, while the other the other was an eminent priestess. There was no way that this would be accepted by those around them. That was why eloping, throwing away their country and social positions in the process, was a natural decision for them.

TLN*: A Japanese phrase to mean “not a big deal”, I guess.

However, there was one other who could not accept this. The goddess.

The goddess appeared before the two and warned them.

But then, instead of heeding the goddess's warning, the two of them turned on the goddess with their request to have a wish granted. Perhaps out of anger at the pair who would not listen to her attempts to persuade them out of their actions, the goddess promised them that she would grant them their wish if they could clear her trials.

She had thought that these trials would be impossible for them to overcome, but now that they have indeed been overcome, it would certainly be impossible to persuade them at this point.

As a god, she is offering to alter people's memories and even change their fates, but they are rejecting this suggestion.

Do they desire to leave this world at all costs?

Do they mean to abandon me despite the consequences?

Dark emotions begin to form inside the goddess. For her, the hyumans are her children that she loves the most. Two of those children are trying to abandon her, their parent, and leave.

Despite her countless explanations about how dangerous the transfer process and the world they would be transferred to are.

The chance for a successful transfer of a single hyuman body is around one in five, so the chance for both of them to be transferred safely is even lower than that.

The world that is their destination (the goddess deliberately chose the harshest one to scare them) is one where even capable individuals find it difficult to live comfortable lifestyles, a world that places tremendous burdens on the people who live in it.

Why. Why do they still wish to transfer to a different world?!

The goddess's anger and bewilderment increases, but the two show no signs of wavering in their intentions.

It is useless to try and convince them.

The goddess finally arrives upon this conclusion. The conclusion that what her two hyuman children desire is the answer that they have come to.

"... I'm opening the gate."

『Thank you very much!』

The goddess begins her preparations to call upon the numerous nymphs that are her followers. As she gives orders to them, she gathers her own magical power.

The two hyumans quietly watch the goddess's back and the work of her followers.

"On the other side is a truly difficult world."(Goddess)

"We understand. Even so, that is where the two of us will do our best live."

(Kanart)

"... If you think that things will somehow work out... Well, yes, things have somehow worked out up until now."(Goddess)

The goddess is not even looking back at them. She comes to her own conclusion and points her left hand, which is working a little reluctantly, towards the pair.

"Gah! Guuuuh!"(Kanart)

"Kyah, ugh, uuugh!"(Cass)

At that moment, the two of them are thrown onto the ground and begin struggling desperately to breathe.

"These are the burdens of the world that you are heading to."(Goddess)

In response to the goddess's words, shock appears on their faces.

"It is impossible after all, is it not?"(Goddess)

"Is this all?" The two of them are unable to say these words to the goddess. The incredible, abnormal pressure is preventing them from even standing up or breathing normally.

"... Two years. I will protect the two of you with my divine power for just two years. Use that time to train your bodies as if your lives depend on it. You really will die, you know that, right? You cannot use magic in that world, so do not think that you can rely on it."

At the same time as the goddess finishes speaking, the strange pressure vanishes.

The two of them look at the goddess as if they weren't expecting anything like this. Her back looks lonely. It doesn't match the atmosphere that she had up until this point.

"Also, the place I'm sending you has a lot of people with black hair and eyes. You wish to live peacefully, do you not? Can you not hear me?"(Goddess)

"Ah, y-yes!"(Kanart)

Though the two of them are in silent awe over the goddess's sudden change

in behavior, the man somehow manages to respond to her questions.

"Then I will change the color of your hair and eyes to black. This way, you will not be thought of as demons in that world."(Goddess)

"Thank you... very much."(Kanart)

"And then there is the language. It would be troublesome if you do not know the words and letters. There may be some mistakes, so forgive me."(Goddess)

The goddess receives some kind of report from the nymphs.

She lifts her head from beneath the gaping wide crater to look up at the sky.

"Everything is ready."(Goddess)

"O goddess, our great goddess, we are forever grateful."(Kanart)

"I have no use for such gratitude. I will not accept thanks from those who would abandon me and this world."(Goddess)

The goddess does not feel the warmth of compassion. It is as if she has put on a thick, heavy mask.

"Make no mistake. The chance that you two will be able to go to another world together is less than one in ten. The chance that you will be able to train your bodies to the point that you can live a normal life there is also less than one in ten. You two have no talent, after all."(Goddess)

『...』

"Doing something like this is as futile as putting make-up on the dead. I am merely taking pity on you, as you are likely to die. You think I am giving this to you for free? Me, give to you?!"(Goddess)

『...』

"I will take something in return. Yes, if you actually become able to live in the new world."(Goddess)

The goddess continues. The two hyumans simply wait quietly for her to finish speaking.

"One thing that you gain in that world that is precious to you. Give that to me. That is the price that I demand."(Goddess)

"Whatever it may be."(Kanart)

"We promise."(Cass)

Kanart Io and Cass Tort accept her words obediently. This is their final agreement with the goddess. They believe that this agreement is so that even after they step away from this world, their connections with it are not severed.

"You're quite obedient when it comes to this... Io and Tort, huh. Io means "deep" and Tort means "transparent", is that right? Hmph, this is not even something that a god such as myself should do."(Goddess)

The goddess stops abruptly, but as the man and woman walk into the center of the magic circle, she begins to speak again.

"Misumi. If you feel even a little guilt towards me, then use this name for yourselves. It is a word that means both "deep" and "transparent"."(Goddess)

TLN: I've messed around in Google translate and I'm quite sure that Io and Tort don't translate to "deep" and "transparent" in any human languages. Someone can correct me if I'm wrong. As for 深澄/Misumi, the first kanji is "deep" and the second is "clear/transparent".

Noise is added to the world and the hyumans surrounded by the light rising from the magic circle fade away.

"... You're gone, huh. What is it? Just what is it you find so dissatisfying about this world that I've made! I don't care what happens next! If everything has gone well, if you have named yourselves Misumi, then I will definitely have you hold up your end of the agreement, so prepare yourselves."(Goddess)

The goddess complains as she moves on, leaving the nymphs to take care of the traces of the world transfer process so that nobody will be able to figure out the ritual that has taken place here.

The nymphs finish cleaning up, a process that took as long as the world transfer itself, and begin to leave, but the goddess stops them.

"I shall sleep. Don't wake me up, no matter what."(Goddess)

This takes place thirteen years before the worldwide chaos caused by the demons.

There are twenty-three years before the goddess wakes up from her ill-tempered slumber, beginning her and Makoto's story.

Will Makoto one day know about the events that took place here?

That has not yet been decided.

Note from the author:

Here is a little excerpt from present day.

Makoto's father: I didn't think that she would ask for Makoto. Though our child is indeed important to us, so it is not unreasonable.

Makoto's mother: Yes. I didn't think that promise would actually be fulfilled.

Father: I wonder if Makoto was able to greet Goddess-sama properly.

Mother: Are you going senile due to your age, dear? I'm more concerned whether or not the goddess is going to treat him properly.

Father: Because she has some of the characteristics of those tsunderes that are the craze these days?

Mother: She's more like a tsuntsuntsuntsundere¹, you know, dear? There might not be enough tsuns there.

Father: W-well, you know! Makoto is our² son, so I'm sure he'll be fine!

Mother: ... I did tell you that I hate when you use "ore", didn't I? You mean "boku", don't you, dear? You don't refer to yourself as "ore" when you're outside, do you?

Father: Mmm, mmmmm! Of course! Makoto is our³ son that we're proud of! Hahaha!

TLNs for this author's note:

1. For those you who don't know, the term “ツンデレ/tsundere” originates from ツンツン/tsuntsun, which means aloof/stuck-up, and デレデレ/dedere which means lovestruck. Thus, the term is used to describe girls who act cold and uninterested while actually having loving feelings. Makoto's mother seems to think that in the goddess's case, there are many more tsuns needed.

2. Here, Papa Misumi uses “俺達/ore-tachi” as the pronoun for “our”, which is an informal/immature-sounding pronoun.

3. And here, he uses “僕ら/boku-ra” which is a more formal/mature-sounding pronoun.

Extra Story V - At that time, Modern day ③

If I went outside, my skin was ruined. In the summer, going outside without a hat caused me to suffer heatstroke in a matter of minutes.

When I walked, I got muscular pain. My legs and loins cramped; I spent every day feeling like a newborn calf or foal. How many times did I imagine how nice it would be to use a wheelchair?

By the time I'd finished eating a meal, I would be covered in sweat. A little while later, I wouldn't be able to raise my arms properly.

If I watched a comedy show, my abdominal muscles suffered greatly. I couldn't tell whether the comedy was funny enough to make me cry from laughing, or whether I was crying from the pain.

This was when my younger brother Makoto was young.

I am Misumi Yukiko. I'm Yukiko, born on the 10th of August. I want to question my parents' naming sense. Though I do think it's better than being named Makoto, born on the 1st of April.

TLN: Her name, 雪子/Yukiko, means "child of snow", so her name is ironic considering she was born in the middle of summer. 真/Makoto means "truth/reality", which is possibly even more ironic because he was born on April Fools' Day.

Right now, I'm studying medical science at university. I'm twenty years old, and the first thing I want to do after graduating is to go to a foreign country to improve my skill, but I'm getting fed up with my father's vehement opposition to it.

Eventually I want to live in Japan doing pediatrics, but even when I tell my father that, he won't hear a word of it.

My mother and younger sister approve, and my younger brother also approved.

Though Makoto left the house suddenly, so I don't know how much that's

worth.

My father says that this is how a man's family is run as he continuously gets in between me and my future. Damn you, Makoto, why didn't you predict that things would turn out like this?

I don't even have any idea where he's gone. Father and Mother wear know-it-all expressions as they tell me that he's fine, but they cry from time to time. I don't get them.

The one thing I can say for certain is, he will definitely not return before I become a doctor.

That day, the letter addressed to me and my younger sister Mari was written like this... It must be nice to be Mari, having a normal name. I've secretly thought that she should have been named Misoka-chan, since her birthday is on the 1st of January.

TLN: 晦日/Misoka means "Last day of the month", which would be ironic if that was her name because her birthday is on the 1st of the month. Instead, her name is 真理/Mari which is another name that means "truth", and she wasn't born on April Fools' Day, so it's a more normal name.

"I'm going to go and help Ouoka-sama* in the south. I think it will be fine, but please don't turn on my PC. When you dispose of it, pour water over it thoroughly just in case, and destroy it using a blunt weapon such as a sledgehammer. Please do whatever you like with the rest of the things in my room. Also, I believe that Onee-san will be able to become a pediatrician. Please do your best. Please treasure brother-in-law-san — well, he is not my brother-in-law yet. If Mari has any troubles after entering middle school and high school, she should rely on a senpai called Higashi. But don't go near a senpai called Ibuki. Also, please remember to knock before entering someone's room. Well then, goodbye."

TLN*: My best guess is that this is referring to Ouoka Tadasuke, a Japanese samurai of 1677–1752. The whole letter is quite bizarre.

And with that, Makoto disappeared. No, he was already gone.

On that morning, leaving behind nothing but this letter that looks like some

kind of joke, he vanished. He hasn't come back home once, nor has he been in contact at all.

But judging from how my parents say that he's gone to study overseas and the detailed instructions that they gave, I get the feeling that they know something. The strings of Father's wallet always loosen easily when one takes advantage of him, but even he closes his mouth as tight as a shellfish when the topic is brought up. Maybe it has something to do with their pasts.

How did they meet, and how did they fall in love? Our parents are such a mystery. They speak fondly of each other, but their story of where they dated and how they met changes every time I ask. I would have thought it wouldn't really be a problem if your daughter wanted to know the details about your romance. It's really a mystery.

Also, they say they hate photos and don't have any from the past, but then why do they have multiple albums of me, Makoto and Mari? Why does a new album titled things like "our family" appear with every season that passes? They actually love photos way too much!

We don't have any contact with relatives but, well, that's fine because it's easier for us. Instead, our parents' friends visit our house, and we siblings never felt any loneliness at the fact that we don't have any relatives.

From time to time we had visitors who were clearly from other countries, which made us feel nervous, but now it's something that we look forward to.

Ah, I'm going off-topic.

I was talking about Makoto's letter.

There's nothing to be said about his destination or objective. That's in the past. There's no way a child who would never let his family touch his PC would ask them to get rid of it. He always recommended that I become a sports doctor. He had long since given up on trying to get Mari to remember to knock before entering his room.

Everything about it was strange.

I'm happy that he accepted my choice of going into pediatrics. Though it's a little disappointing that he didn't do so face to face, but through a letter just

before he disappeared.

I've told this to my family and close friends, but Makoto is the reason I chose the path of medicine.

He was incredibly frail, and he came down with a fever whenever he did anything. Though there were a lot of times I thought he was a lot of trouble. After all, when I was young, I often had to look after him.

My own body was weaker than most people's, but Makoto's weakness completely did away with the complex that I had about it. I was completely fine compared to my younger brother.

I was practically forced to do judo, and I also had to do housework. I think what kept me going was the feeling of wanting to protect him because he was weaker than me, and the fact that he was trying so hard despite that.

In the end, judo became a habit for me. I'm still commuting to university from home, so I still have to do housework. Well, you know, university students have social lives (truly), so I did have (a lot of) things change for me as well.

Right now, I'm able to deal with most of the housework, I have enough of a reputation that professors, senpais, kouhais and people in the same year call out to me, and I've progressed in judo to the point that I'm considered one of the higher-ranking light-weight athletes.

Since I have no intention of living my life as an athlete, I haven't participated in any formal matches since I entered university, nor do I belong to any clubs, but I did take an interview once when I was still in high school.

My body is still weaker than most people's, but I'm healthy enough. I just get tired a little more easily.

When I heard about the option of entering medical school from some person who looked like he was from the media, I began to wonder if my body was broken, but that's not the case.

In reality, the ambition that rose from my feelings of wanting to cure Makoto of his injuries and illnesses hasn't caused my body any harm.

With that said, he has better stamina than me now and can run around

normally. My feelings from when we were young ended as just an excuse for me to go into medicine. That makes me feel a little lonely, but I'm honestly happy about it.

Now that I think about it, Makoto really hated standing in front of the gas stove's fire and going outside for various martial arts.

... He has lots of painful memories of being burnt and having his bones fractured. Now that I think back to it, I was horrible for calling him a weakling.

I wonder when it was.

When was it that the look in his eyes began to change?

That's right.

When he came across archery, I suppose. No, maybe around the time Mari became old enough to talk.

Around then, he was really giving everything he had to take even one step forward.

At first, it was impossible to tell whether he was trying to hold his bow or use it as something to lean against.

I'm not exaggerating when I say that one time, Makoto failed to maintain a kneeling position, rolled over and fractured his arm. I wonder why our parents were so intent on having him learn a martial art. I really have no idea.

Well, among all the martial arts, I think archery is one of the calmer ones, but... Even so, I thought it would be impossible for Makoto to keep going with it.

He stood, sat, ran, used a rubber bow and studied the forms.

I'm really impressed that he continued learning it. Though I'm looking at it in hindsight, since Makoto's body became healthy, wasn't it a good thing in the end?

Now that I'm studying medicine, I can say with certainty that it was most definitely not healthy for him, but... in the end...

Unexpectedly, this is kind of a gray area.

Well, this is something I can take my time and deal with once Makoto comes

back.

It doesn't feel like I've been separated from him forever in this life.

Leaving the joke letter aside, this is Makoto's house and we are Makoto's family. That's why I believe that there's no way that Makoto won't return to this city, to this house.

He's someone who's already made a miracle happen with his own body. No news is good news, mhmm, that's right.

He hasn't even introduced his girlfriend to me yet. It's not fair that I'm the only one who's introduced my boyfriend to him.

I've seen photos from his club activities and events and it's not like there's no female presence at all. If he takes the time to date someone, they'll understand just how good a person he is. I think that a girl like that should exist somewhere.

The problem might actually lie in Makoto himself.

He's still young, but he has hobbies that aren't suitable for his age.

Would a normal teenager record a historical drama that plays at 10am so he can watch it later? Would he not know the names of any idol groups, but get into heated discussions about supporting actors?

TLN: Credits to Unities for fixing this translation

Would he have historical drama DVDs lined up by series name in alphabetical order in a corner of his room? Would the contents of his cellphone's music player consist of Endless Gypsy Kin and Billy Van*? No, there's no way. That shouldn't be the case.

TLN: I can find Billy Van through Google, but not Endless Gypsy Kin.

When I was talking to my younger brother about an erotic game, he made an excuse about how it's not that kind of game and that it's a masterpiece. At that time, I was actually relieved.

His notions on the relationship between men and women date back to the Showa Era*, or maybe even before that.

TLN*: Showa Era = 1926–1989

Even if a girl were to confess to him, I don't think he would nod his head quietly.

Before that, he might misunderstand and put her into the "family" category like me and Mari, or in the "friends" category with Ibuki-kun and the others.

... I think having friends and companions is a wonderful thing, but that's different from love. I get the feeling that he probably doesn't understand...

I hope I'm just overthinking things.

"... Hey, Yukiko, your eyes clearly aren't focused."

I wonder if he's ever fallen in love with someone before?

"... Anyone home? If you just keep moving your hands, I'm going to start getting really scared, you know?"

Would things be different if there was a girl who would teach him about these things more forcefully?

"No! Yukiko, you can't do that! Definitely not allowed!"

So loud. A person is trying to think here, you... know?

"Stop! Really, stop! You're too strong for me! Please stop – !"

Oh. I forgot what I was doing right now.

"S-sorry!"(Yukiko)

I was almost about to put the tip of a syringe in between the nail and fingertip of my boyfriend's ring finger.

No good, no good.

I'd asked him to help me practice inserting needles so that I can learn to do it in a painless way, and also make sure that I hit blood vessels properly.

Fortunately (?), my boyfriend is the type whose blood vessels don't float up easily and are hard to find, so it was good practice. And right now, I'm in the middle of that practice.

To think that I would get caught up in my thoughts. I feel sorry for my

boyfriend who's been spending his days getting holes poked in both his arms.

"I-I was wondering if you changed your mind and decided to torture me instead."(Boyfriend)

Since he has no particular experience with physical activities, there was no way for him to break out of my grip. Mhmm, that must have been scary.

"I'm sorry, okay? Let's call it a day here."

Yes, and if we don't leave now, we won't have time for our date. Though we're both university students, we have to set aside time to spend together.

"Were you thinking about something?"(Boyfriend)

"Yeah, a little."(Yukiko)

"... About Nakatsuhara High School?"(Boyfriend)

"... ?! No, something else. It's going to be December soon, right? I was just thinking about how fun it's going to be with all the events."(Yukiko)

I give a rather vague laugh in response to his concerns. I've heard that my brother has nothing to do with the incidents at my former school, anyway. When I was suddenly told things about when he was in middle school and high school, I was really surprised.

"Even if you say that, we're really busy in the end, you know? Though I do want to do as much as I can, and I will."(Boyfriend)

"I'm looking forward to it."(Yukiko)

"Ah, I want to see Makoto-kun again. He was always nice to me and it made me happy, like I had a younger brother. I hope I can see him, even if it's just to wish him a happy new year."(Boyfriend)

"Yeah, you're right. But he's already in his second year of high school; who knows how busy he'll be with his social life? I don't think New Year's Day will work, you know?"(Yukiko)

"Eh, I'll come to say happy new year and then let's go and do our first visit to the shrine together. Or are you busy on that day?"(Boyfriend)

"I'm not busy, but..."(Yukiko)

New Year's Day is bad. I have to protect his wallet, or our New Year's dates will be...

"Is there something wrong with it?"(Boyfriend)

"New Year's Day is Mari's birthday. She's merciless, so she'll demand both New Year's gifts and birthday presents, you know? She'll press you for those, calling you Brother-in-law-chan, you know?"(Yukiko)

"Ugh..."(Boyfriend)

"You're an only child so you even fawned over Makoto, do you think you can win against Mari?"(Yukiko)

That's right. My boyfriend is an only child. It seems that he yearns to have siblings.

That's why he was always so helpful towards Makoto, and wants to meet him so badly. Apparently he ran into Mari-chan in town one time, and he took her and all of her friends that were with her (I think there were seven or eight of them) to a family restaurant and treated them to a meal. So weak, far too weak!

The reason Makoto was so nice to him was probably because... Ever since I got a boyfriend, Makoto didn't get holes poked in his arms anymore. His blood vessels were exceptionally difficult to find as well.

I get the feeling that Mari really just sees my boyfriend as a Farfetch'd*. It's a problem that he fawns over her despite that, but like Makoto, he does prefer cats over dogs. It doesn't seem like I'll be able to correct that. I don't have a choice but to have Mari restrain herself a little around him.

TLN: Yes, the Pokemon. I'm guessing this is inferring that he gives things to her often.

I'm happy that he likes my brother so much, but I don't think they'll be able to meet on New Year's Day. I feel sorry for lying to him, but I might have to tell him that Makoto's gone overseas to study as well.

I link arms with my boyfriend and feel his warmth, feeling frustrated that I can't tell him the truth as we walk along the road by the riverbank upon which

the setting sun is shining.

Extra Story VI - At that time, Modern day ④

“Hey, Natsu, where did you hide Makoto!”(Genichi)

A man who appeared to be at least 40 with a robust body was visiting a dojo.

The man’s physique matched his loud voice, it reached the ears of the person sitting with a cup of sake in her hand at the very back of the room. As she furrowed her brows, you could clearly understand that this guest who was screaming at her door was someone she did not prefer. Exasperated, she shook her head and let out a sigh.

“That idiot....it has only been 3 days since he last came, doesn’t he have his own disciples to look after....”(Natsu)

Without making a single sound, she stood up and walked towards the entrance. She came upon the entrance where the voice was coming from and opened the door. There was the figure of a man who was in his late 30’s or early 40’s. He had a mature face and gave off a dignified aura. But to say he was a man in his early 40’s would be a mistake....he looked like he had enough energy and physical strength to take on a platoon by himself.

“Stop coming here and saying the same thing every time, Genichi.”(Natsu)

She did not hide her annoyance at the man.

The woman called Natsu could turn away visitors, no matter who they were. She always gave off a certain aura of intimidation. She was said to be the same age or a few years younger than the man in front of her now, but her skin was still very smooth and pure white. She was someone in her mid-30’s to early 40’s but if a passerby saw her they would think she was in her mid-20’s.

“Where is Makoto! Where did you hide him!?”(Genichi)

“I do not know! I do not care! Go home!”(Natsu)

“Stop hiding him! Tell me! I will not go home! I have only taught Makoto the beginning of Iai*, I have many things left to teach him and I only started teaching him because you recommended him.”(Genichi)

TInote: the art of sword draw

"I do not know where he is, I stopped teaching things a while ago, I only let him use the dojo for practice now! I have no reason to hide Makoto!"(Natsu)

The verbal battle between the two stopped and only their soft breathing could be heard.

Natsuko was the one who taught Makoto how to use a bow. Munakata Natsuko was the head of the Munakata Dojo. She learned archery from her teacher when she was young and could not put her skills to use. She led a life as a mercenary before she became an archery teacher. She jumped from battlefield to battlefield rampaging with a gun.

Bows and arrows were quite useless in the modern world battlefield and Natsu herself felt better wielding a gun than a bow. The aim with a scope and the use of the sight on the gun were more useful to her compared to the technique of using her eyes that she learned when she was young.

Natsu left the battlefield after some time had passed and returned to Japan. She erased the smell of gunpowder that lingered on her body and opened a dojo. She never said why she left the battlefield but that experience gave her a mind that was able to be calm in any situation.

But currently the man in front of her was pushing that mind, thus her boiling point dropped quite considerably.

Well, the relationship between them was not close but not far either thus they could be called associates.

".....Do you really not know where he is!?"(Genichi)

"Yeah, I really don't know.....well, I am sure he is alive. But leaving that aside, why are you so obsessed with him, you have other good disciples. Leave Makoto alone."(Natsu)

It is as Natsu pointed out.

The man in front of her was Genichi Ishido, one of the few sword masters in the modern age. He has many excellent disciples and usually does not care about spares.

"I do, I have given them training they could do while not at the dojo and introduction letters for tournaments and other dojos."(Genichi)

"Why did you do that?"(Natsu)

"Well, it was because I wanted to focus on training Makoto."(Genichi)

".....Why.....That student of mine has no talent in swords at all, I really don't know why you would spend time training him."(Natsu)

"Yeah, he doesn't have a single ounce of talent in swords in a very refreshing way. I think it has been 6 months and I have finally gotten him to the point where he can cut down a straw doll."(Genichi)

As she heard him clearly admit that Makoto has no talent for the sword, she could not understand why he was so obsessed with Makoto. He could shoot an arrow very well and liked doing it. He was almost creepy at this point regarding arrows. Natsu believed that Makoto loved archery and evaluated his archery highly.

"Then why are you here, if you are just doing it as a hobby then you should not be in that much of hurry."(Natsu)

"Hobby, maybe it was that but I also feel it was kind of different. I know one thing though, I do not want to stop on a disciple who I have spent so much time training.

He talked while rubbing his chin with his hands.

"Initially I was just interested in the boy you raised to become the genius archery man. But now, I am just interested in his straightforward nature."(Genichi)

"Straightforward.....Best way to describe Makoto."(Natsu)

Still, she could not understand why he was obsessed with teaching Makoto.

"I taught him very basic things in these past 6 months. Stuff you can do even at home; how to swing a sword and how to train your grip strength. I also gave him a weighted wooden sword to practice with."(Genichi)

".....Wow, really was nothing but basic.....Even then, could he not even cut a little bit of the straw doll?"(Natsu)

Even if it was her disciple, she still felt kind of disappointed in him.

“Of course, when I let him first try it, he cut his own hands on the blade.”(Genichi)

“.....”(Natsu)

“Even so, he was still doing the training I assigned him and has not declined anything. He always has these shining eyes and I could keep teaching him stuff without any interruption or complaints. I told him to do some basic muscle training and other things to get a better body.”(Genichi)

Genichi was a bear not a swordsman;he takes care of the small bears like Makoto.

“.....I thought it was amusing, even if he had no talent in swords. He was somehow proceeding with pure hard work and diligence. I want to see what he will become in the end with all his hard work.”(Genichi)

Natsu again let out a small sigh. She was pitying Makoto, Genichi will never let go of Makoto until he has learnt everything that Genichi will teach him.

“When Makoto comes back I will tell him to escape from you.”(Natsu)

“Hey, hey, hey, I thought I said a very nice story right now! To be honest, I thought you felt the same way regarding that boy.”(Genichi)

“I have already left the scene, I have also given Makoto to another person so right now I am just the big sister at this dojo.”(Natsu)

“Bull! That was such a crude statement...What a lie...Natsu, you are almost 40-”(Genichi)

“What age am I, Genichi?”(Natsu)

“.....Big sister, I meant nothing by that. Ok, let’s stop, seriously where is Makoto? Have you talked with his parents?”(Genichi)

At the sudden cold atmosphere, Genichi immediately retracted his statement and tried to change the subject. He felt he was going to see his great-grandfather soon at that cold atmosphere.

“Well....yes I have gone to meet them about Makoto....but I think the reason

was complicated so they didn't tell me anything concrete."(Natsu)

Natsu's words were straightforward, which was rare for her.

"But aren't they good people. I heard that when he came to you for training they gave you their full trust and was glad that you were training him."(Genichi)

"Oh, I think that was because Makoto somehow made them have a good impression of me. I went to meet them before I started his actual training. They also requested of me to do some special training for him."(Natsu)

".....What was it?"(Genichi)

"Oh, it was for me to teach me how to shoot an arrow on horseback. But since I did not have a horse I told them I could do modern bow on horseback."(Natsu)

Modern bow on horseback. Genich felt really uneasy when he heard those words.

"Also about how to fight in close quarters. That would require me to teach him how to use a Uchine."(Natsu)

TLnote: Uchine is an arrow but has a much smaller shaft. This weapon was used by archers in Edo Japan, it resembles a small spear. The only difference was that it has a rope attached to the bow and you can throw and fight in CQC-close quarter combat with it.

Uchine. It was a weapon used in close proximity by archers. It has a unique shape with a spear head attached to the tip. The handle was similar to a short sword and can be used in such a form. There was also a rope which allowed this weapon to be used with a bow and retrieved in mid-range combat.

Furthermore, the usage of Uchine was very versatile, as it can be used in a similar way as a sickle and chain would be. The weapon was dangerous for a beginner and should be handled with care.

Natsu was an expert in this art, she has used it many times with a knife and string on the battlefield.

"So you agreed to his parent's request. Ah.....Makoto was so pitiful, truly

pitiful. I can understand how you might teach him the Uchine but how did you teach him the bow on horseback in the modern age."(Genichi)

"I used my jeep instead of a horse. Of course, I was driving, Makoto was too young to get a license."(Natsu)

"A Jeep!!!"(Genichi)

"Yeah, I put him in the passenger seat and opened the roof of the car so he could stand up."(Natsu)

"Stand up!?"(Genichi)

"We did a few tries outside. We practice when we made left and right turns. I would full throttle the accel and then Makoto would stand up to shoot."(Natsu)

"....."

"Whats wrong Genichi?"(Natsu)

".....I learned today that I should put Makoto through a much tougher training regimen."(Genichi)

Genichi realized how sweet he has been concerning Makoto's training and that he was too soft on Makoto. He decided in his head that he will make Makoto menu much tougher in the future.

"Oh, that is good. Makoto surprisingly does have a strong mind. He will go through a lot of stuff without giving up. He will say that it is impossible for him a lot but ignore that. Rather during those times, he gets more energy and goes inside his own mind to bring out greater strength. Look for those times and always make him get to that point."(Natsu)

Makoto was truly pitiful. Your teacher has already figured out your limit.

"So, what was the explanation his parents gave?"(Genichi)

Will they hide his circumstances from someone who put him through all of this or will they tell her about Makoto's true situation to her..... was going through Genichi's mind.

".....Don't laugh at this, ok?"(Natsu)

".....Ok."(Genichi)

“.....World.”(Natsu)

“What?”(Genichi)

“They said he went to another world, they do not know when he will be coming home!”(Natsu)

“What was ‘another world’, was it something the kids invented?”(Genichi)

Genichi asks with a serious expression.

“They said he went to a different planet...like he was not on Earth anymore! Stop making me say this, do you have any idea how embarrassing this is!”(Natsu)

Natsu was red from the embarrassment of Makoto’s parent explanation.

“What planet....is there even such a place in this solar system for human life?”(Genichi)

“Don’t ask me, I was told this by Makoto’s father who had a very serious look. When the mother came out and told me the same thing while crying I could not ask any further. Well, all I know was that he was not dead and he will come back if he is still alive.”(Natsu)

“.....”(Genichi)

“If you want to ask them directly, I will give you their address. You are an acquaintance of mine so it should be no problem. Also, I think you would have went to them sooner or later since you are also his master.”(Natsu)

“Ok, then come along with me.”(Genichi)

Natsu stood in silence at this guy’s inability to read between the lines. Natsu was writing the address so she doesn’t have to accompany him. Why could he not get it....this stupid bear.

“Genichi, why would I come along?”(Natsu)

Natsu gave pained expression when she asked that.

“You are also worried about Makoto right? And with you there I won’t have to worry about getting lost.”(Genichi)

Genichi not getting lost was actually his main reason for asking her to come

along.

“Oh yeah, I forgot that you’re idiot. I should be impressed that you were able to remember the way to this dojo in the first place.”(Natsu)

Genichi’s lack of direction was world-class. Their first meeting was because Genichi had gotten lost and she had to help him get back.

“Well this will be interesting. I wonder what type of people Makoto’s family members are, I am looking forward to meeting them!”(Genichi)

“...Well, I will tell you one thing, they look nothing like Makoto.”(Natsu)

“Really, well this will be fun!”(Genichi)

Genichi’s voice echoed throughout the neighborhood.

Although she furrowed her brows at Genichi, she was thankful for his aggressive method of taking her along.

Even though she knows this was just a roundabout way of asking her to accompany him to Makoto’s house, she felt that she could not just leave it alone for Makoto’s sake. He was her precious disciple so there was no way she could not have been worried.

“(I wonder if we should bring a souvenir? Genichi has no sense for gifts so I would have to get it?)”(Natsu)

Natsu stood up and called Makoto’s parents. She told them she and one other person would come to visit tonight. She then got in her jeep and went shopping for a gift.

Extra Story VII - A certain day... ②

Being the god of the sun is hard work.

Unlike Tsukiyomi, I, who controls the sun have many responsibilities; it is quite troublesome.

It is not like if you are missing for several days, it won't affect the world. No, there is no rest day for this job, I have to constantly do it.

Also, it is not like I am respected or rewarded for doing this job, my believers do not give me many offerings in this country.

Although Tsukiyomi has made my job many times easier by occasionally taking over a part of it and doing all the paperwork, there is still so much to do.....

With a heavy heart, I open the door to the office.

Bickering.....bickering.....

Ok, see you soon...

It is fine to argue sometimes if it can advance a topic or problem then I can endure it.

However, right now, all this pointless quarreling was just loud noises, nothing but loud noises. It did not help in the slightest or advance our solution to the problem.

The reason for all these problems is because my busy-body, lecturer, serious brother of mine, Tsukiyomi has gone into hiding.

It is not the same as when I went into hiding in Ama-no-Iwato*. Due to him being absent, the administrative processing abilities have decreased by 50% and all the gods are now suffering from being overworked, many have also collapsed. The projects he was previously handling have made negligible progress. It was so steady and stable before.....why did this happen, you ask?

**TInote: Ama-no-Iwato is speaking of the time where Susanoo destroyed a lot of Amaterasu's creations and killed one of her attendants. She hid herself in the Ama-no-Iwato as a way of getting back at him, it concealed the sun and almost wiped out all of the heavens and earth. Susanoo groveled at her feet when she had come out. Also as atonement, he gave her the Kusanagi blade.*

My brother did not hide for the same reason I did but it was because he had used too much of his power when he tried to interfere with another world. It exhausted his power so much that he was unable to maintain his form even in this land. He had retreated to our mother's side to recover.

I have confirmed this with my mother* therefore, I have no doubt about this matter. The realm in which he is recovering is close to his element and should accelerate his recovery. It is the ideal resting place for most gods but I do not have the opportunity to go there often.

**tInote: Amaterasu mother is Izanami-no-mikoto....the thing you fight in persona 4*

.....I remember before in Takama-ga-hara*, my other little brother was always making noise in an attempt to get our mother's attention. He had a huge obsession with our mother and once made this stupid outburst towards Tsukiyomi. Now Tsukiyomi is the one helping our mother the most with him just lazing off.

TInote: Takama-ga-hara is the realm of the gods in Shinto lore. Her other brother is Susanoo-no-Mikoto and his wife is Kushinada-hime

Marriage really does change a person's personality.

"Amaterasu-sama, here is your schedule for the day."(Uzume)

One of the Ame-no-Uzume-no-mikoto is accompanying me to help me manage my schedule. She told me with a very serious face about my schedule. It is not like I can say no to it.

"It would be great if you could just squash into one meeting, so I can quickly

get to the paperwork."(Amaterasu)

I ask her to squash all the meetings together. Every time it is meet this god or visit this god. I am quite drained. Moreover, I do not have time to myself anymore, it's true you don't know what you have until it's gone..... My brother was so useful.

"....."(Uzume)

Did she get angry? Her beauty will go to waste if she is like that, even in this realm her beauty is unrivaled. Well, it is too busy to go out and have a date anyway.

"You will be meeting with 34 sea gods and goddess, then you will be organizing the document."(Uzume)

3...34 gods?! Impossible...really it is physically impossible! I do not have enough time....You would really have to stop time for that to happen!

".....Worst case scenario, I will be calling Tokihakashi*-sama."(Uzume)

Tlnote: Tokihakashi no kami is actually not a worshipped god in Shinto lore, he is one of the twelve objects Izanagi-no-okami discarded after leaving Yomi-the land of dead. That object became the god of time.

"You must be joking."(Amaterasu)

"I am serious as Izanagi-sama is with Izanami-sama."(Uzume)

"Uzume, not all those gods came from different god realms! Group together the gods that reside in the same realm, that will shorten time as we don't have to meet each god individually and can just meet them as a group. Please do that instead?"(Amaterasu)

"Yes...it would shorten the total time...."(Uzume)

Uzu, stopping time is taxing, even for one of the 12 origin gods... and stopping time because work will pile up... that is just disgraceful.

"Please do so, I don't believe I can take much more of this."(Amaterasu)

"Yes, then we shall begin with the Greek."(Uzume)

“Greek!”(Amaterasu)

“Yes, Greek.”(Uzume)

Greek gods, they have many gods in that realm and they all have very... unique personalities. But I do not like them... they are too erotic, far more erotic than human beings are. Though, I do not think they will increase their numbers anymore.

Ughh, it cannot be helped. It is bad to refuse people who will arrive with pre-notice using the official procedure for visiting.

“Uwahhh! You look very busy.”

A very high-pitched voice came into my ear as I resolved myself. Recently I found them having a bad habit of not showing up for work.

Now that you people have come... I will never let you go... we shall become victims together...hehehe.

Pitiful Munakata-san-joshin.*

TL note: they are 3 female gods created when Susanoo challenged Amaterasu, they were created from the sword of kusangi and are technically children between Susanoo and Amaterasu. Amaterasu created them so she is their mother. Ichikishimahime, Tagitsuhime, and Tagorihime are their names. Below, Amaterasu likes to call one of them by her other name instead of ichikishimahime, using sayori instead. They seem to be nieces in this context though. They can be considered niece since they were created from the sword of kusangi, Susanoo sword.

These 3 are my niece.....all of which really liked to get on my nerves.

Sayorihime, Tagitsuhime, and Tagorihime.

When my little brother, Tuskiyomi, was here, these girls were so diligent... but now they just goof off. Well, they are still deities here, also I believe that Tsukiyomi was preventing them from making any problems and taking care of a lot of the problems in general.

“You 3 came at a good time, I am meeting the Greek god of the sea now, you

guys should join me."(Amaterasu)

I want to reduce my burden even by a little. Thankfully, despite them not being sea gods, being related to the sea is good enough in these circumstances. Yeah, I am not forcing them to join.....it is fine.

Though, thinking of our status, they cannot sit beside me.....

"What!.....just kidding, aunt. We will help you. We must properly pay our respects as the most worshiped deities in Japan."(Tagiri)*

TInote: The things they represent are protecting the nation, gods of good fishing harvest, the imperial household, safe voyages of the sea. Japan's main export is fish so many people pray to them for safe business and travels.

Tagiri, I cannot let that statement fly by.

"Oh yes, aunt has been unable to take care of the work Tsukiyomi-sama has always done, thus needs our help right?"(Sayori)

Sayori, why did you respectful say Tsukiyomi-sama and not uncle like you are calling me aunt. Why does my little brother have a greater status than me?

"Please let us help you, us being the parents of Hachiman*, will give us adequate status and power to stand equal with the Greek.....We will be sitting in the representative seats right?"(Tagitsu)

TInote: Hachiman is the god of war but is also the god of agriculture and also another god you pray for bountiful fish

Ta-gi-ts!

"Who do you think you are speaking to, I am the representative! Why are you guys acting almighty when I created you guys from my brother's sword?!"(Amaterasu)

Why are they acting so high and mighty?

I know they may have more believers than me because of the number of fishing companies. But I know that I will always be the in the hearts of the Japanese people at the number 1 spot! I am sure of it!

The Ise* Shrine is always bustling in the year and Izumo* is the number 1

sightseeing spot in Japan.....

TInote: Ise grand Shrine is the second oldest Shrine in Japan and one of the largest shrines dedicated to Amaterasu and Izumo Shrine is the largest and oldest shrine in Japan. Izumo Shrine was her shrine until she gave to Ōkuninushi for his act of giving Japan to her grandson.

You guys are popular because the effects of the era of samurai are still relevant today...the numbers will reverse themselves later on. So what if you guys have twice as many believers as me, do not underestimate the God of the Sun.

Those stupid samurais and generals, I hate them for spreading Hachiman over the country.

“How unsightly of you aunt, to cling on to past fame!”(Tagiri)

You little monsters sure know how to get on my nerves.....you want a fight? I will give you a fight!

I am done, my patience has passed its limit, I have dealt with this crap for too long!

I will show you the power of the Sun God Amaterasu, I will cause the heavens and earth to descend into war!!!

“Amaterasu-sama, please control yourself! Please stop provoking her, you three, we are at her limit already!”(Uzume)

“Ehh—“(Sayori/Tagiri/Tagitsu)

“.....”(Amaterasu)

“Amaterasu-sama, please stop, you almost summoned the beast in this room and destroyed the heavens.”(Uzume)

Ridiculous, I was not going to destroy the heavens, I was just going to cause a war that will drag the earth and heavens into it.

“Please give us your help, it will be greatly appreciated. We will go to the other room for our work, Amaterasu-sama, please go meet Poseidon-sama.”(Uzume)

You three survived by the skin of your teeth. I head to the room where I will meet the Greek god of the sea.

It is that perverted father's brother*.....I do not have the confidence that he will not lust after me.

Ednote: perverted father is Zeus and he is Poseidon's brother.

In the worst case scenario, I will sacrifice Uzume to him.....yes, that is a good plan.

"I thank you for waiting, Amaterasu-sama has arrived."(Guard)

"Poseidon-dono, I thank you for visiting this distant realm.....I see that your wife is not with you today. A shame, I was hoping to greet her and talk about old times." "(Are you here to escape from her and tour this distant place? Just because you cannot win against your wife, you come over here to my realm. You better not cause any trouble here or I will report you to her in an instant.)" (Amaterasu)

TInote: Ok, the brackets are the things they really mean when they are saying those polite words to each other, this goes on for awhile so please bear with me

Greeting him with my beautiful voice and shaking the hands of the person who stood up from the seat, I take a long look at him. His figure is that of a robust fisherman. When you come to Takama-ga-hara, please wear some clothes. People here will think you're more of a pervert than you already are, coming here with no clothes and just a leaf.

"No, it is my fault for coming on such short notice. I have heard that the good boy Tsukiyomi has been injured and bedridden. We are both hard workers of the sea thus I have come to visit him. I did not bring my wife today because I thought that bringing so many people would cause far too much trouble. "(Do not be so stiff girl, just let me stay here for awhile. I forgot our anniversary so my wife is angry right now, let me hide here until she calms down. I promise I will not cause any trouble.)(Poseidon)

His attitude is quite good. Well, this guy is like my brother Tsukiyomi, who is a

hard worker and does his job above and beyond his responsibilities. This greek god has been worried about his wife and marriage for a while. I think he should be like Zeus and have more fun though.

“Your feelings are more than enough, but my brother is currently recovering in the land of dreams. Our god of dreams is looking after him with my mother. Please do not worry and enjoy Takama-ga-hara. I will ask Uzume to guide you and take you to sight see this realm.” “(Do not disturb Tsukiyomi, we only have one god of dreams and he is already taxed with helping my brother recover. I will not say anything to your wife so just go and enjoy yourself for now, ok?)”(Amaterasu)

“Although I am very grateful for your proposal, I must see Tsukiyomi-dono. I have to talk to him about an important matter regarding the sea. To not burden your god of dreams, I have brought our god of dreams, Morpheus*. Thus, if it is not too much trouble, will you let me see him?”(Poseidon)

TInote: The god of dreams, he appears in Ovid Metamorphoses. His form is that of a winged daemon.

Oh?

.....I am shocked, I stop trying to read between the lines.

He is seriously here to see my little brother, of course I know he has some intentions of playing around but he is actually here to see my brother and even brought their god of dreams. Since he is here for a serious visit with my brother, I am unable to refuse him. He is Poseidon after all.

Susanoo said that in the world of dreams, Tsukiyomi is well enough to have people visit him so it should be fine. I can ask for the contents of the conversation from Yume-no-kami*

TInote: The Shinto god of dreams, I am actually unsure if his exists or not, I could not find him in any Wikipedia article or google search but since the author puts him and knows far more lore than me I will just leave this tad bit here, if you guys can find an article about please leave it in the comments below.

“.....Yes, it should be fine then. Is there any other reason for your visit?”(Amaterasu)

“Oh no, well... it will depend on the visit, but there is one more thing.”(Poseidon)

“Let me hear it please.”(Amaterasu)

Please get to the point, I have many more meetings and paperwork to do.

“I will say this to you, the sea has become more tense and rough.”(Poseidon)

“.....Is it a situation of a power struggle between the gods?”(Amaterasu)

If this is the reason then, we will have a huge problem on our hands. We gods have stopped fighting for the world a long time ago.

“It is not a power struggle.....do you not know?”(Poseidon)

“.....?”(Amaterasu)

“In the past, the management of the seas was done by completing various miscellaneous chores. It was very hard work and I could not handle it all by myself while keeping my wife happy so I let my subordinates handle it for a while. They collapsed quickly, so I kept getting new subordinates to replace them. It was a rinse and repeat operation.”(Poseidon)

What the hell? Take care of your own employees and your marriage. From the looks of it, neither of them are doing well. I am properly doing my work as the god of the sun and my employees are fine.

“Tsukiyomi-dono once came to my workplace and when he saw the management system, he felt despair. He took it upon himself and created a brand new management system which incorporated all the sea gods in the world and named it Marine Sea Management system.”(Poseidon)

When did he do that, I just do not know what my little brother does anymore.....

“Thus, in case of some problem occurring or there is something wrong with the system, Tsukiyomi-dono would come fix it. But now since he bedridden, he is unable to do that. I am able to fix small problems but if it is a problem with the core then I do not believe I will be able to handle it and will have to stop the

system."(Poseidon)

"Yes, of course, that is the correct course of action, it will be too dangerous if the core has a problem."(Amaterasu)

"Yes, but that would mean I would have to go back to the old way. When I told my subordinates and the other seas gods this, they all threw a tantrum. 'I do not want the old way.' 'I want the new way.' 'I like the new way.' Many of them said they will go on strike if the old way comes back. Thus, I must speak to Tsukiyomi-dono to understand more of the system."(Poseidon)

.....Those are some subordinates you have there, my girls are better than that. Do you guys have any idea how much we are suffering because he went into recovery.....?

Are all of our problems connected?

Tsukiyomi, our most precious gem. He was too clouded by dust for me to notice him but I cannot believe that not only did he support us, Buddha, but also the world's sea.

"What do you say, Amaterasu-dono. I have heard that it will take about 100+ years for him to fully recover. But, if you can get his approval, I will support you in his healing as well. This is not only my wish but the consensus of all the sea gods."(Poseidon)

"Is this the consensus of the entire divine world?"(Amaterasu)

"Incredibly, yes, this is the consensus of the entire divine world. Tsukiyomi-dono has been good to all the realms and does not have a single enemy thus, it was quite easy to get approval. If we do not act, the sea levels will rise, the icebergs will melt much faster and the deep sea relationship with the moon will be endangered."(Poseidon)

The god of the sea had a very serious expression right now.

Did he obtain the cooperation of the entire divine world?

If he is telling the truth, then my brother should be able to recover more quickly. Iwanaga-hime had also suggested this but I did not believe we would be able to obtain all of the gods' approval hence I rejected it. Also, the amount of

power needed is too much of a burden on any one god so it was too dangerous as well.

TInote: Iwanaga-hime was someone supposed to be her granddaughter in law but did not happen due her grandson obsession with her sister Sakuya-hime

I do not know why the divine realm was so pleased with my little brother. Many of the human realm myths and tales portray him as an evil person or unfaithful but I quite cherish my brother in reality.

When Susanoo had to kill Orochi*, Tsukiyomi lent a hand during that. The Iwanaga-hime* thing with my Grandson, Tsukiyomi lent a hand with that. Even a certain human named Masakado* was helped by him.

TInote: Orochi, the 9 head serpent Susanoo had to kill to save his wife Kushinada-hime. Iwanaga-hime story is that Amaterasu grandson Ninigi-no-mikoto wanted to marry her sister but since her father thought she was too young for marriage Ohoyamatsumi(mountain god) offered his older daughter Iwanaga-hime. But Ninigi was set on it and her father agreed. Masakado was a samurai who was framed for crime he did not do. The parts of Tsukiyomi lending a hand is just for this story and did not happen in the actual lore.

Even those Munakata-san-joshin came out to help because they were worried about Tsukiyomi. They were once saved by Tsukiyomi when someone tried to kill them*.

TInote: this is not true in lore, just the author creating a reason for them liking Tsuki-bro

...There was a time when they came close to betraying me. They had created a god not in the realm of god but in the human world. He is not a god like me or Tsukiyomi but a person the humans and the 3 girls granted godhood to*, a new receiver of faith. I believe his name is Hachiman*. Currently, he is the one with the most believers. Most of the younger generation has faith in him due to the samurai considering him a guardian god, and his influence also reached a good

amount of people overseas. He too was helped by my little brother and is now devoted to him.

TInote: Hachiman's real name is Ojin, the 15th emperor of Japan, he was worshipped by the people as a god of war due to his mother when she was pregnant with him, keeping him in the womb for 3 years while she fought in the war. He then won a lot of wars himself and was considered a guardian god for the samurai. She was the former Empress of Japan Jingo. His shrines are dedicated to him, his mother and the 3 princess gods, Ichikishimahime, Tagitsuhime, and Tagorihime

.....I wonder when did Takama-ga-hara turn into a worshipping place for my little brother, I know I am also part of too...

“Thank you, my little brother will be overjoyed to have so many gods help him in his time of need. I will certainly also ask the gods in the other realms to help too.”(Amaterasu)

“Oh! Then I will be going to see Tsukiyomi-dono, I am sorry for taking up so much of your time.”(Poseidon)

“Do not mind it, please take your time.”(Amaterasu)

If my little brother recovers quickly then I will be released from this hell. So, if just by asking other gods to help will speed up his recovering then I will keep asking. Finally, I will return to those peaceful days.

I will be free from these arduous days of working so hard . To make that happen, I will do anything to make this plight pass.

While making a list of gods who can help my brother recover quicker, I slowly work through my schedule today.

Extra Story VIII - At that time, Modern day

5

About 5 minutes from Nakatsugawa station, in commemoration of a new bookstore, a certain author was doing a book signing session.

This was also a weekend, thus many people were off work and have come to visit. The line for the signing was very long.

The author wrote a light novel, the contents of the novel are very traditional. It is describing the story of a young hero, but the genders in the line are split 50–50. This is quite unusual for this form of novel. Usually, the line is predominately males.

But when you take a look at the author you are easily able to find out why there are so many females here. The author was a very handsome man. The rumors of his identity have been speculated to be an actor, model, prince of some unknown country, *etc.* He had black hair, a figure, and face that made you think he is European.

His pure white skin and smooth facial lines further represent that he may be doing work in the acting field. His hair was neither long or short, and was naturally black. It suited him very well.

He was a very stunning man. A little while ago, he was caught by a reporter who took his picture and exposed it to the media. Previously, his face was unknown to the public and he never put any pictures of himself in his works. The buzz generated by the media is most likely the reason for the gender ratio of this line.

That man was busy interacting with his fans, there were several people behind him that were busy moving things around. One of them was very young and stood out among the people.

There was a man beside the author who was handing him the books to sign and instructing the little girl in the back as well.

Some people in the front could hear their conversation. Naturally, they adjust themselves a little to pick up on bits and pieces of the conversation they were having.

“Mari-chan, please take a seat. This line is not the end and will definitely increase later on. Sensei* has also informed the shop that he can handle an even bigger line than this, so we will be here for quite a while.”(Editor)

TLnote: The editor is the editor for his father’s novel. Sensei in this case means author, it is what Japanese call people who are authors.

The little girl called Mari nods and asked the other man something. She is not an adult but could not be called a child.

“Dad, will you be taking a break?”(Mari)

“No, I am fine, please take a break sweetheart.”(Hayato)

She speaks to her father and the editor. There were a lot of gasps from the people lined up when they heard the word father.

The mature man answered with a smile as he was resting on the chair. He was thought to be in his 30’s but if his daughter was this old then his age is much higher.

His pen name is Kanato, his real name is Misumi Hayato. His daughter’s name is Mari, this was his youngest daughter.

Having a daughter was a surprise to the people here, but having such an old daughter while looking so young was a bigger surprise. If he had said that his oldest daughter was in university, then his signing event would become an interview about beauty and anti-aging tips.

After his daughter left to take a break, his editor spoke to him.

“What’s the problem, Nakajima-san?”(Hayato)

“Sensei is more popular than I would have expected! May I make a suggestion, I will not say go on a nationwide tour but, 3 or 4 more times in other places will greatly help?”(Nakajima)

“Please, I cannot handle that. I have only said ok because we would do this for one day, if we go so often then it will affect my writing as well.”(Hayato)

“Sensei, the other prefectures are quite nice, I believe sometimes it is fine to take a break in the countryside or some other places?”(Nakajima)

“I am sorry, but the times I spend with my family are the greatest moments of my life, I will do this again when I release my next book.”(Hayato)

“Hmm, please at least discuss it with your wife.”(Nakajima)

“I understand, Nakajima-san.”(Hayato)

Hayato makes a bitter smile at the man Nakajima, who was clearly trying to persuade him to do more signings. He was an editor that has been with Hayato for a long time, he has been to his house and also had a close relation with his family.

His fans came up to him one by one asking him to sign his other books and voicing their support for him.

Mari sat at the side with a bottle of juice.

She thought her father was really popular from the line she saw today.

“I know dad is amazing but I do not understand what he writes about and the difference between what he writes and what brother plays on his computer.....”(Mari)

Mari did not understand the books her dad writes. From her perspective, being a light novel author seemed really plain and it was a minor job with a very niche market. Mari is the type of girl to read only for academic purposes, she reads to gain knowledge.

The one time where she had opened one of her dad’s books and saw that the left page was a picture and the right side only had one word.

“Absolutely”

Mari immediately closed the book because she thought there was no way her brain would be able to understand this unknown format.

One day she snuck into her brother’s room and started one of his games. She could not understand why Makoto would play these games that have so many unrealistic women and really unrealistic hairstyles. She thought that the men at her home were really weird/unique...

“That person over there...”(Mari)

Mari notices someone in the lineup. It was a person in the middle of the lineup. There were two people there, Mari remembered that around that portion of the line is where the last person with a numbered ticket, in other words, they are the last people who will receive an autograph. All the others after that are here for his new book and voice their support for him.

She felt those people were familiar, she kept trying to remember while drinking her juice.

“Yes, now I remember, those people are from brother’s archery club. I believe the name was Azuma Yukari-san?”(Mari)

She was my brother’s classmate and the captain of the archery club. She remembered seeing the other one in the photograph but does not remember his name. The names her brother said back then were: the reliable Azuma and 10-meter Ibuki.

Mari felt that seeing them here was a little unexpected but she felt she should greet them. They are people with a connection to her brother and had come to her father’s autograph session thus, greeting them would not be unnatural.

Fortunately, the line was controlled by poles and ropes so there were no interruptions when trying to approach them.

Mari put down her plastic bottle and headed towards the person named Higashi. As she walked up to her, she saw another person that she has never seen before. However, this did not stop her from continuing to walk, this made her seem quite bold and daunting. People may think this was dangerous but Mari was a master of Karate, she was at a level that was far beyond middle school and can easily compete with pros from high school. She was going to continue this activity even in high school and by that time her name would be famous is what many of her teachers and teammates are saying.

“Hello, are you Azuma-senpai?”(Mari)

“Oh, yes...I am Azuma, sorry, have we met before?”(Azuma)

“No, I have seen you in a picture, you are the captain for the archery club at Nakatsuhara high school right?”(Mari)

“Oh, is it a picture of the members? Maybe you are a relative ?”(Azuma)

“Yes! I am Mari, Misumi Makoto’s little sister. I am happy that you would come to my dad’s event today!”(Mari)

Misumi Makoto, a name that is quite unpleasant to her now. Yukari Azuma was clearly upset at that name. She was also surprised by this girl who came up to her and said she was his sister.

Azuma was surprised by two things, one is the name Makoto. She was very troubled by the sudden overseas transfer of Makoto.

The second surprise was that this was her father’s event. The author’s autograph session her friends were forcing her to come to was the father of Mari, which also meant he was Makoto’s father.

However, the people most surprised by this were the two people beside her.

The people with her were the real fans of this novel. In other words, they were the true fans of the author Kanato. Both of them were Azuma’s friends and club mates.

“You are Kanato-sensei’s daughter!”(Nobuko)

“Nobuko, that is the wrong point to be surprised at! Makoto-kun’s father is Kanato-sensei! To have a son that is the same age as me...”(Kana)

“Thank you for always looking after my brother, next year I will also be attending Nakatsuhara so, please take care of me then as well, senpai.”(Mari)

Mari ignored their inquiry about her father and continued the conversation about her attending Nakatsuhara as well.

“Umm.....Mari-chan, so your father is the writer up there?”(Azuma)

Azuma was the first to recover the damage she suffered from the shock, she asked if Mari’s father was the writer giving the autographs. She was amazed that she did not know anything about Makoto’s family and today she had coincidentally met two of his family member. This situation made her think that the world was a small place.

“Oh yes, did my brother not say anything about us...What a troublesome brother...”(Mari)

Mari was confused at why Makoto did not say anything about their father's job. She felt that it was fine for her to say it and will tell the story if necessary.

"Umm.....Mari-chan, Makoto-kun is 17 right, then how old is your father now?"(Kana)

"Hey, Kana! That is a rude question!"(Azuma)

Even though Azuma switched focus, her friends were still on the subject of the Makoto's father's looks.

"I believe he is 42 this year."(Mari)

"You are lying, I can only see him as early 30's!"(Nobuko)

This time it was the person named Nobuko who shouted out.

"Well.....Makoto is not the oldest in our family, I have a sister in university right now."(Mari)

"....."(Kana/Nobuko)

Nobuko and Kana both had their eyes open in shock saying she must be kidding over and over again.

"It is the truth, she is very famous in the world of Judo. Her name is Yukiko."(Mari)

"Misumi Yukiko.....oh, the person who said she will be not continuing Judo in university and disappointed the entire Judo world!"(Azuma)

Azuma seemed to know the name, she remembered a small girl throwing men twice her size and that it was slightly comical.

Even though Mari and Yukiko did not look similar, there was a faint resemblance in them. Also, there was no one who heard about Yukiko's family situation.

"I will be joining the Karate club, although the club is different from you senpai, I hope you can still help me when I am in trouble. My brother always said to depend on reliable Azuma-senpai."(Mari)

"Makoto..."(Azuma)

"I was also told to not go near Ibuki-senpai."(Mari)

“Hahaha.”(Nobuko/Kana/Azuma)

Azuma and the others started to laugh and then nod their heads at each other.

“Mari-chan, your brother is right in not to approach Ibuki. Don’t worry, I will protect you if something happens.”(Azuma)

“Yes, do watch out for Ibuki or more victims will appear.”(Kana)

“If he was like Makoto-kun, dependable in the club then he would be popular though.”(Azuma)

Mari continued along this topic.

“I have noticed that my brother has never brought a girlfriend home with him.....Is he not popular in school?”(Mari)

“I think the girls like him more than the other guys but I do not think it is in a romantic sense.”(Nobuko)

“Hmm.....I heard a story about him confessing to Azuma, I think?”(Kana)

“Kana, what are you saying here?!”(Azuma)

Azuma tried to block Kana from speaking further.

“Oh, My brother confessed to you senpai?”(Mari)

This was the first time she heard anything about her brother’s romantic life thus, she was very much interested in this subject.

“No...that...”(Azuma)

Seeing Yukari like this was rare. She did not possess the dignity that she usually had with her and was like a regular high school girl.

Kana and Nobuko were both grinning.

“Actually I confessed to Makoto and was turned down...”(Azuma)

“No way! You confessed to my brother?”(Mari)

She was not a woman who someone like her brother could romantically associate with, therefore hearing this made her think that it would have been quite the big jackpot. He made such a beautiful girl confess and then rejected

her...She started to think her brother was crazy.

“Nobuko, Kana, I will remember this.”(Azuma)

“What, I can’t hear you over all the noise.”(Kana)

Whistling(Nobuko)

Both of them just passed Azuma’s words into the wind.

“My brother is a fool, rejecting someone who is able to become the captain of a club and such a beautiful person too....Why?”(Mari)

“Being called beautiful by Mari-chan kinda gives me a complicated feeling”(Azuma)

Azuma made a bitter smile. When Mari first called out Azuma, she felt like she saw a beautiful doll walk up to her. Her eyes were the only thing that convinced her that it was not a doll talking to her.

“I am told I resemble my mother and father, but I think they are much cooler than I am.”(Mari)

Mari praised her parents looks. Azuma felt as this was simply a truth and there was no malice behind it. She was also surprised to hear that her parents were more beautiful than Mari.

“...I feel like I should butter up to Makoto-kun more.”(Nobuko)

When Nobuko thought of that one fact, she started to make a bitter smile. His sister Yukiko was someone she saw on television and was beautiful, Mari-chan in front of her is also beautiful, a famous writer who is also beautiful and a mother who does not lose in comparison too.

Just thinking about Makoto who was in the middle of all of that is truly pitiful.

“I feel like I understand why Makoto-kun is fine in the archery club.”(Kana)

Kana nods at what Nobuko said.

“Well then, Mari-chan, if you ever come to our school, it is fine to come and look for me. I will help you with whatever you need. Also if you need help studying for entrance exams, I can also help with that too.”(Azuma)

“Oh, thank you very much, may I have your number to call you as well?”(Mari)

“Of course.”(Azuma)

“Yes, thank you, I will be going now.”(Mari)

As the 3 watched Mari go down the line cheerfully, Azuma felt a little disappointed that she could not ask anything about Makoto. Though. since she had obtained her contact information, there will be many more chances to get the information later.

Azuma saw Mari stop her feet in the middle of the line.

“What is wrong with Mari-chan?”(Azuma)

Azuma saw that she stopped to talk to another person. She then leaned forward a bit to she who Mari was talking to...

“Oh! That is the first year in my Club.....Yanase....Hasegawa? I am surprised to see her here.

“Oh, it’s true!”(Kana)

“Hasegawa huh?”(Azuma)

Azuma muttered her name under her breath. She was pretty sure that Hasegawa also did not read light novels and was like her. Forced by her friends to get multiple books signed by the author.

Look at that conversation, Mari-chan was like a reporter interviewing Hasegawa. Hasegawa gradually withdrew herself from the stories Mari was telling her, I felt that it was quite interesting watching from the side.

‘Well I am going to have to talk to Yanase later or some rumors will spread. I wonder what type of person is Makoto-kun’s father, I am looking forward to meeting him.’ (Azuma)

It turned out to be an interesting event. Although she had come forced by association, Azuma could find some information regarding Makoto and felt appreciation to the two friends beside her. This was a very strange day for her is what she thought at the end.

Extra Story IX - A certain day in Asora ①

X day X month, Sunny day.

From now on, I will write down the events that transpired in this place that we have emigrated to, Asora.

I was requested to make a weapon called a Two Blade Sword* by Tomoe-sama.

Thnote: it says Nihontou meaning Japanese sword but he interprets as a two blade sword, as in the blade is one in the beginning but becomes two swords through some gimmick.

I had never heard of this weapon before hence, I've been very worried about how to make it. We prided ourselves as the best blacksmiths in this world thus, no matter what, we cannot refuse this request.

However, when we were shown documents and other resources of blacksmiths making this blade, we were left speechless.

The weapon is classified as not having a single bit of magic; they do not use magic when creating the weapon either. This is the first time we had witnessed such a process to produce a blade.

They do not rely on magic or the fire spirits to control the furnace or even touch upon the will of the steel. They worked in a very natural process and seemed to be using their eyes to measure the situation and furnace when making the weapon. They possessed incredible skill. I felt as if the people making this had skills equaling or surpassing us.

They worked on a single blade with their entire being over many days, continually hitting it. Everyone who watched the footage could only say it was beautiful.

Tomoe-sama also has said the metal they use had no magic imbued into it, that would mean it was pure steel or some derivative of steel. The footage also showed other material being added to the weapon and they seem to be

common materials...I cannot say much about this weapon.

This request was going to be considerably difficult.

X day X Month Sunny after a little rain.

We continued to discuss and decipher the resources she provided for us.

Fortunately, we did not get any difficult requests from Waka-sama and Mio-sama like the Two Blade Sword (apparently it is called a katana). But we did have a problem concerning the armor we were supposed to give to Waka-sama. It was due to our lack of knowledge about Waka-sama that resulted in this, we did not know that he would not wear the armor we made for warriors. Also, there was a problem regarding his magic power thus, we had to switch to mass-production to constantly replace Waka-sama's armor. His magic power was quite immense and we had thought we had grasped the limit but sadly, that was not the case. Which was why Rugui-dono's coat interested him greatly but when he first wore it and released a bit of magic power, it turned into tatters. Coincidentally, when he saw the garment, he felt that the armor resembled the clothing from his country. The clothing was made with extra effort and a specialized process. I also asked Waka-sama about the other matter that had been troubling us.

According to Waka-sama, it seems the nihontou is just a combination of the name of the country Waka-sama is from and the word for sword there. The actual name of the weapon is Katana. In other words, the blade is purely single blade and is not a blade that has a gimmick that allows it to become two swords.

I have also learned from him that the metal used for the blade must have different hardness. This was a process of folding the flaps* of the blade many times over. Apparently, this was a very old way of making the sword but it was enforced by Waka-sama's country to make sure only skilled workers will forge these blades. I should take this into consideration.

TInote: The flaps are the blade before it is sharpened and polished. The folding is to make the blade harder and stronger, western blacksmiths in modern day do not do this to make movie katana's because it is inefficient. Japanese enforce this way of making katana's to keep traditional sense

alive.

In addition to learning about the flaps, we also learned that the blade was thin and single edged. This would mean the blade emphasized speed and sharpness. Tomoe-sama, even though she wants one, she has told us that she had never touched the real product before, she also emphasized that we must keep the sharpness to a maximum. The length was varied among these blades, and the way to carry the blade was by a sheath attached to your waist. The long blades have the edge facing downwards, the smaller ones face upwards*. Tomoe-sama wanted a long and small one with both facing upwards. I believe I heard from Waka-sama that the smaller one is called Wakizashi.

TInote: The long ones facing downwards are the ones called odachi, sephiroth's sword is impractical and does not follow this rule. The Wakizashi is a reserve blade that is used when the Katana breaks.

The handle and hilt were created separately from the blade and was made from cloth and wood. I did not understand this part entirely and there doesn't seem to be any resource materials available to explain this part either. I wonder if they required a separate craftsman who would be specialized in this regard.

More and more I am questioning if this really is a weapon? This "katana" is too artistic to be called a weapon.

X day X month a Rainy day.

We let the young people do the forging of the Katana prototype and let the older people analyze the resources Tomoe-sama provided us with. Tomoe-sama, herself seemed to be getting impatient that we had not made any progress towards manufacturing her blade yet. Although we have the materials required to create the katana, we do not understand the technique used to make it or how to properly temper the materials.

We have tried using iron in making the prototype, but it always ends in a strange result. However, we do not give up, blacksmithing without magic is just unknown to us but in no way is it an impossibility.

I also understand why the elder had split the group up in such a way. Because

it is an unknown area, the young people would be more inclined to research and experiment to figure out this technique and technology. Adapting to new techniques is something the young people do better than old people. It is a rule of thumb for our people.

The older ones using their knowledge to analyze the resources materials will allow them to have a better understand of the procedure. It will be a combined effort of both generations and us old people will let the young people have a try to solve this the old fashion way too.

However, the resource material said this weapon required an incredible amount of care after each use. How is it used in the battlefield then?

From the various shapes and forms we saw, the blade was a very precious weapon in Waka-sama's country. I wonder if it's just a treasure sword that has no practical use? I will try to mention this to Tomoe-sama tomorrow.

X day X month today is cloudy.

When I had mentioned that, Tomoe-sama showed us footage of the Katana being used in Waka-sama country. It was beyond our imagination.

We were shown two things, the technique called Iai and a sword style using the Katana.

We saw a man with a superb physique that would not lose to us dwarves(I think it is a half or maybe an ancestor of them). He trained with a straw doll, we first wondered if that was training for a man of his physique. But when we heard the blade taken out, the sound, it was amazing. I think I saw the blade but I am not sure, I know that I did not see when he returned the blade to the sheath. It was unbelievably fast, he slashed the doll in half and I could not see when he did that.

The elder was even at a loss for words...No, every single person here who saw that was sweating incredibly.

Waka-sama was sitting in a dojo like place, the older male from before confronted a young woman and struck with his katana. The woman blocked it and tried for a counterattack but gets struck down. This weapon is a good fit with any user it seems, it does not matter whether it is a man or woman

wielding it.

From this footage, I believe I have obtained a certain understanding about the bizarre weapon that is a Katana.

The Katana is not only a weapon, but rather a style of weapon. It was sharp and quick. It seemed to be an unbalanced weapon with these two specializations. However, the Katana is a weapon that grows with the user, it is a sword and nothing more. It is more about the wielder's ability and if he is able to bring out its full potential. If an ordinary person used it, then nothing would happen. But in the hands of a master, it becomes a weapon of epic proportions. The margin of performance is too wide for a single weapon like this.

I trembled once more.

This is the most primitive blacksmithing technique, without using any magic, just intent. The will of the craftsmen is what forges the Katana.

The handle and blade must be forged with the intent of being one, they are not merely attached to the weapon for the wielder to hold it. That is why they decorate the handle, they hope to show the personality of the sword and craftsmen.

To be able to reproduce a Katana, I wonder if we can do such a thing?

This weapon, in a way, is something even I would consider to be the ultimate form of a weapon. This weapon is a weapon made with the aim to be a human sword. This could not be comprehended in the fashion we have been studying it in, we have been thinking this a solely as a weapon, not as a combined form.

I looked around and I am sure many people have similar opinions from the gazes and stares I see.

X day X month Sunny day.

The Katana did not contain any magic powers or any spirit power, just the soul of the craftsmen. That is the reason you must keep hitting the iron.

The reproduction of the blade is not going well, we have constructed a mold which has the shape of the Katana, but this did not please her. We felt humiliated, the production of the Katana was not moving at all and the elders

have been giving up one after another.

Moreover, there was accident recently that resulted in the death of a person in Asora. The accident resulted from our careless management. It was truly unbearable.

As craftsmen, we know that the things we produce were dangerous and we had to pay close attention to these dangers. No matter how much Waka-sama forgives us, it was our blunder that resulted in the death of Tomoe-sama's split form. I swore in my heart that I will forever keep this from happening again.

X day and X month Sunny day with fine temperature.

We finally had a breakthrough.

Waka-sama visited the elders, it was a request for something.

Recently even the chief of our village has been saying he believes it to be impossible. I understood his will and intentions completely. No matter how many times I see the footage of the Iai, I do not stop sighing at the beauty. I hope that one day I can touch the real product.

Waka-sama visited us because he will be leaving the city of Tsige and will travel to the city of Rotsgard. It was a greeting for that.

However, after chief and Waka-sama discussed something, the chief's expression turned sunny like the day.

The chief gathered everyone to see Waka-sama off. Then made a declaration, he said it is impossible for us to reproduce the blade right now.

To not rely on magical power, spirit power, or even the metal's will. This is a technique that we have honed for more than 1000 years, thus saying we can create something without those is impossible without many years of practice and knowledge. The craftsman there have the same amount of skill as us but they have practiced and honed a different technique than us and climbed a different mountain. He declared that we must climb that mountain slowly and not rush.

But this was not the end of his speech. His words continued.

He spoke to us saying, we must make the Katana with our technique and our

materials. He told Tomoe-sama that he would give her the masterpiece she wanted.

We cannot imitate the techniques right now. That is why we must use our best techniques and materials to make our “Katana”.

My body gained strength from that.

The prototype that we will make tomorrow will no doubt be a masterpiece. Even if we cannot put our souls into it like those foreign craftsmen, we have our own way of putting our souls into it.

Sharp, quick, beautiful and strong. Those were the combinations we will use to make the blade.

A family of blacksmiths like us working together, then there is no one in this world who can compete with us. Let us go all out and realize this blade.

Extra Story X - At that time, Modern day ①

This is the story of when Makoto first entered high school.

Makoto had a lot of hobbies, archery is obviously one of them, games, reading, movies , gardening, watching historical stage plays. There were also a lot of hobbies that he had but does not do anymore because he either no longer had any motivation for it or just got bored.

Makoto also liked trivia and wanted to know various things about the world. This has become kind of detrimental to him, as he learned knowledge that gets in the way of learning important knowledge related to school. Makoto's hobbies change as the seasons change. But there is one hobby that he has yet to discard no matter what, appreciation for historical plays. Archery for him has exceeded a hobby at this point and has now entered the hall of fame in his mind. He learned too much trivial knowledge and too much knowledge concerning the Edo era of japan...It has gotten to the point where he once taught the teacher in japanese history. Though when we moved onto an era other than Edo, his vast knowledge become completely useless, and he almost got a failing grade in the test.

He started a new hobby in the early summer of his first year of high school. He started to play a MMO with his friends. He had started due to being invited by a friend and then casually started playing using his own computer at home. The game was normal but talking to friends in real time and playing with them was fresh to him, so he had fun. Although he did not understand why they had invited him and he did not get as invested into the game as his friends, he still enjoyed chatting with his friends and hunting for materials.

One day, after Makoto finished dinner and gathered at the meeting point in the game. They moved to their hunting spot and started to collect materials.

The job he played in the game was a fighter. It is the best class in the game per pro players. The level of the character was also very high. However, this level was achieved by tagging along with his max level friends and is not because of his own skill in the game. His skill in the game was quite bad, the

healer in our group is the support role and Makoto character is supposed to be the firepower of the group. But due to his skill, they could only have him play the middle range role, instead of the full frontal role that his character specializes in.....it is quite sad. The two friends he plays with does not care since they are already max level, they are only helping train and helping another character get materials.

The other friend they were helping was someone from Makoto's archery club and started the game the same time as him. His name was Ibuki Masamune. When Makoto first started the game, he called out to his club friends and wanted them to play with him. Ibuki was the only one with a computer so he was the only one who could play the game with Makoto. However, the man named Ibuki was different than Makoto; he was a man with many different tastes. He had a busy lifestyle that was full of dates during the weekends. He had a great personality, but his real-life status made Makoto's other two friends say something to Makoto when Ibuki was not with them.

"The people with a life can go die and explode."(Makoto's Friends)*

Tlnote: this says riaju explode, which if you have not seen any of those types of anime or read any of those types of manga,LN means. The people who have a life can go die.

Makoto coughed when they said that and wondered with a bitter smile why was he invited then? This is something Makoto wonders later on too.

Ibuki, even though did not play as much as Makoto, he still had better skills in the game. They did not know whether it was that he could guess how the AI would operate or he had a better game sense, but whenever he played vanguard, he would smoothly dodge and attack the enemy. Even though Makoto had a higher level than Ibuki, Ibuki's player skill was on a much higher level.

The dps members of the group were deleting enemies instantly.

"Ibuki-shi, you are strong like usual."(Afternoon Cat)

The group healer, Afternoon cat said amazed.

"Ibuki-shi is too abnormal, I definitely do not want to face him in PvP."(Night

Cat) The other member of the group who was a knight named Night cat said as he tried to help Ibuki. These two people have the same name in many other games, that is why many people who play the game know both of them. Unlike Makoto and Ibuki, they play the game with a passion, having recognition is something they take pride in having.

Them recognizing the strength of Ibuki's character shows how high Ibuki's skill level is. They have yet to fire a single shot towards the enemies yet. Ibuki possessed a high attack speed of seven attacks per second which enabled him to take down enemies in less than a second. Successfully doing this meant you had to hit commands specified by the game and those command had to be entered within a second. His hand speed and sense for the keys was quite impressive to be able to keep up with that. Ibuki, himself also knows the attack speed of the enemy and this was just from his own ability as a person.

Ibuki Masamune's house was a very wealthy house. This game, like many others, lets you buy in game content. Ibuki did exactly this. He used money to buy many healing items and rolled the Gacha* which contained many items that ranging from the lowest grade to the highest grade. He rolled until he obtained all the highest grade items. The drops from rare bosses? He obtained them with money. The skill quest items you get from winning PvPs? He obtained them with money. The limited rare items that have long past its due date? He obtained everything with money. Right now, the color of his character's armor is golden like a certain King of heroes in anime.

Tlnote: the gacha if none of you have ever played a mobile game or Japanese MMO's is were you use the in-game currency you obtained to acquire characters or items. You purchase in-game currency using money. The certain king of heroes is of course Gilgamesh from Fate/Zero.

"Oh, but I thought they left this kind of shortcut for people who do not have much time to play the game." (Ibuki) The shortcut Ibuki was talking about is spending actual money for the items. He is right that this is the shortcut for those people. If we all went in an all against one match, there is no doubt that he would come out on top in the end. He may lose a couple times, but his ability to learn is quite outstanding and very fast.

".....I knew it, I am the weakest." (Makoto)

“No, no, Makoto-kun is among the top when we are talking about the people who started in the same time frame as you.”(Afternoon Cat) “Using Ibuki-shi as a reference is completely wrong too.”(Night Cat) Both Afternoon and Night cat tried to cheer Makoto up. It was true that Ibuki is abnormal, he was able to catch up to both the cats in a matter of two months of play time. Although the two cats did not know how many millions Ibuki spent on the game, they knew he had the power of money. Occasionally, they did spend some money on this game, but it was on the level of a measly few hundred yen. They had never gotten the highest grade item from the amount they had spent. In fact, they had always thought S and A grade items in the Gacha was a legend.

“Oh, I leveled up.”(Ibuki)

“I also leveled up.”(Makoto)

“Nice.”(Both Cats)

Makoto and Ibuki both leveled up. The two cats congratulated them.

“Ok, then let’s stop for today.”(Afternoon cat)

“Agreed, it is also time for the boss to come out, I think it is better to stop for now.”(Night Cat) The two cats had said that their hunt for today is over... or it was supposed to be.

“What? There is a large number of enemies coming this way?”(Ibuki) “Wow, true.”(Night Cat)

Ibuki looked at the edge of his map and saw a horde of enemies coming in their direction. They were following something, but the map did not show what.

“Oh, I heard that sometimes, idiots come here to PK because PKing is allowed on this map, then they get chased by the monster mobs.”(Night Cat) “Are they trying to get themselves killed, a monster mob like that will kill you instantly.”(Afternoon cat) They seemed disappointed after finding out the reason of why this phenomenon happened.

“Wait, why did we come to such a dangerous map?”(Makoto)

Makoto makes a genuinely good question. Being killed by other players makes you drop your equipment and lose experience. This field was risky for someone

like Makoto.

“Well then, shall we take down the PKer, After Cat?”(Night Cat) “Yes, let us take it down, Night-chan.”(Afternoon Cat)

The Healer made a barrier that only party members can enter. Then used a skill to make sure that it was impossible for enemies to move when they reached a certain distance from him. The barrier was made instantly. The knight used a skill that increased his defence by a lot.

All of this happened in the blink of an eye.

They waited for the PKer to come.

It was a race against time between whether the spells effect ran out first or they kill the PKer.

“Oh, as I thought, it was a cloak...though it is pointless in front of us, I guess it would work on people who are busy attacking monsters and then you come behind and kill them.”(Afternoon Cat) “Namu amibda*”(Night Cat)

TInote: he says a Buddhist prayer to the PKer.

At the moment the effect ran out, damage appeared and we could see red splashes of blood. The light of recovery item was there and stopped the next instant. It was all done within an instant, truly trampling down on the PKer. Night cat said a prayer to the PKer to mock him.

Numerous items were dropped from the PKer, it looked to be equipment.

“What the hell, you guys PKed me.”(Pker)

A bubble comes from the dead body.....it shouldn't be able to talk, it is just a corpse.

Makoto and Ibuki seemed to have been rendered speechless from the unreasonable words of the PKer. This is actually the first time they have encountered a Pker, so they did not know how to react.

“Well, we are PKK.”(Night Cat)

PKK, Player Killer Killer, as the names implies, they kill player killers.

“Well, just wait, I will revive you and kill you again to make you drop more

items."(Afternoon cat) The afternoon cat uses the skill to revive him and then killed him again. It will take an instant to kill a 1 HP character. If you're surrounded by enemies and you have 1 HP, there is no way to survive. The two of them seemed accustomed to these situations.

"Hey! Stop that, I will get Despina!"(PKer)

The killed player talked to them on open chat and tried to make them stop killing him. The cats used the funny face emoji at him. The Despina is the loss of experience and money when you die.

"Night Cat-chan, this guy is really well-equipped."(Afternoon Cat) "Afternoon Cat, it seems he has been Pking for awhile."(Night Cat) The entire body's armor dropped, from head to toe, they were S to A grade items. Night cat had already killed all the enemies that were coming at them and was back with the gang. Makoto also saw an item that he has been saving in-game money for and was going to buy soon.

"Why does he not teleport, why is he still here, you two?"(Makoto) Makoto found it weird that the Pker did not teleport away. He knew Afternoon Cat had placed a spell to stop them from moving but it should not have blocked teleportation. He thus, wondered why this did this guy not teleport away? He did not understand the reason.

"Oh, this is a skill Night cat-chan possesses, Shield Efe, it is a knight skill that acts as a teleport seal. The MP usage is quite bad but it is a top-notch skill in harassment."(Afternoon cat) "Why does this guy not log out yet? If he did then we can't revive him, so why?"(Ibuki) "Oh, this is a logout restriction PvP map... well, there is the ALT F4 command to quit the game but it seems this guy does not know about it. I wonder if the reason he does not logout is because he wants the items that he dropped here."(Night Cat) The four people were conversing on Skype. Even though the game had a text chat, it was too troublesome to use. Since they were all acquaintances, conversing in real time was much easier and more fun.

"All of these items are quite high grade, I guess he bought them with a lot of difficulty"(Afternoon Cat) "Well, I am pretty sure that it was bought with the money he obtained from Pking."(Night Cat) ".....I feel wrong picking something

up, should we just sell it?"(Makoto) Makoto told them exactly what he thought. He felt wrong using an item that someone stole from someone else. Thus, he did not want to pick it up and use it.

"Makoto-kun, then he will not reflect on PKing...well, we will reveal his name on the open chat later, but for now we will leave the items just like this."(Night Cat) "Yes, just like this."(Afternoon Cat)

"Just like this.....you mean let it disappear?"(Makoto)

The items dropped from monster and players will disappear after a certain amount of time.

"Exactly, disappear...this guy has a lot of good items and seeing them disappear will be the most painful thing to his eyes. That is why when it disappears it will affect him the most...even if it doesn't affect him, we will reveal his name so it will be harder for him to PK from now on."(Afternoon cat)
"He needs to understand that being a PKer has it's risks."(Night cat) The two cat's punishment was quite severe. They even used some skill to speed up the item disappearance time and showed it like a countdown.

"Stop it, pick up the items!"(Pker)

The Pk started to spam lines on the chat and filled the entire open chat with those as he saw the countdown happening.

"I am sorry, I am to full from all the Sardines."(Afternoon Cat) "Also, 1,2,3 and gone."(Night cat)

As soon as Night cat said gone the items disappeared.

The spam became infinitely much harsher and was now, completely swear words towards them and their family. Makoto and Ibuki both felt that it was unsightly and closed the open chat.

"Thank"(Afternoon cat)

"You"(Night cat)

"For" (Afternoon cat)

"The"(Night cat)

“Hard”(Afternoon cat)

“Work”(Night cat)

The group of four returned to the city after afternoon cat finished his speel.

Makoto felt a weird fear of MMOs from this incident. He eventually distanced himself from MMOs and even though he still hangs out with the two in school he did not play MMO's actively anymore. It calm down to the frequency of if he was invited to play then he would but any other time he would not.

“I really have to thank that PKer “Tomoki”, if not for that incident then I would have been stuck with MMO's for a long time.”(Makoto) Makoto looked back on that incident while he watered the mint grass in his garden.

Extra Story XI - A certain day... ③

In the Northern region of Europe's Divine Realm, there are three goddesses who manage fate.

Each of the three sister goddesses are responsible for one part of fate. One is responsible for the past, one is responsible for the present, and one is responsible for the future. As a whole, they are one of the supreme deities in the world and can be said to be independent gods that do not rely on the others.

Their duties are to record the past and present and use those to predict the future.

They are three goddesses with a major influence on the world and are very popular among the humans who have created countless stories and books with them either being the forefront of the plot or driving the plot. They are very difficult goddesses to meet and attempting to do so would take months, if not years to even get just an appointment date.

"It sounds like a loud dispute." (Urd)

The person who looks outside because of the noise, even though this is a very rare action for her, is the goddess who records the past, Urd*.

TInote: One of the sisters of Norn, Urd. The author put the name as Elta. I do not know how he got that name, but since the actual name is Urd, I will be using that name.

She has taken an interest in the disturbance that has interrupted her daily life and wants to talk to the gods that have come to the World Tree*.

TInote: The World Tree is Yggdrasil. This is Norse Mythology as some of you may know from the name Urd, one of the 3 sisters of Norn.

"They were very rowdy on their way here. I believe three gods that have come here, Onee-sama." (Verdandi)

One of the two women who are at the entrance of Urd's room responds to her. The one who called Urd, Onee-sama, is the middle goddess Verdandi*, the goddess that records the present.

"We have evacuated all the other personnel. Right now, it is just Onee-sama's friends and us."(Skuld)

The voice that follows Verdandi comes from the woman standing beside her, Skuld. She is the youngest sister of Norn, and the goddess the predicts the future. Though they are goddesses of fate, they do not actually have much power to do battle with other gods. The only who can fight is Skuld*.

TInote: Many lores and poems also have Skuld as one of the Valkyries of Odin. This is why the author says Skuld is the only who can fight among the three sisters.

"Hmm, they are not very calm and are coming quite fast. Would you like it if I helped, Urd?"(Queen Mother of the West)

"I am very thankful for your offer, but please do not worry and quickly evacuate Queen Mother of the West*. There are no longer any gods that would challenge us to a fight. There is no merit in it at all. The person who is coming is a little foolish and seems to be in a hurry."(Urd)

TInote: She is a Chinese goddess worshipped in Taoism, but the her earliest incarnation pre-dates the formation of Taoism.

"Very well, I shall take my leave. Please do not hesitate to call."(Queen Mother of the West)

"I thank you for your words."(Urd)

The figure of the woman named Queen Mother of the West disappears in an instant. She has left the place known as the World Tree. It is exactly as Urd said, there is no meaning in fighting the three sisters of Norn. They are just the Observers and Recorders of fate. They do not have the ability to distort or change fate itself. Moreover, the three sisters of Norn have immense defensive power when they reside in the World Tree*. There is absolutely no meaning in having a battle in this place.

Thnote: They are also the protectors of Yggdrasil in Norse mythology. They use the water from the Well of Urd to keep the tree alive and healthy.

“Oh, I’m sorry for barging in here like this, Norn Sisters. I am kind of in a hurry. Just send the complaints to me later, okay?”(Susanoo)

“Coming out after such a long absence really is hard on these old bones. I am sorry as well.”(Daikokuten)

“... I wonder if there is even a need to come here in the first place.”(Athena)

Verdandi and Skuld both move to the side of Urd. From the entrance of the room, three people rowdily enter the room with any prior notice.

“Oh my, if it is not Susanoo-dono, Daikokuten-dono, and Athena-dono. This is a very unusual combination of people.”(Urd)

The elder sister, who usually does not have any interest in things or move around the celestial realm, is surprised by the combination of gods that has appeared before her.

“Susanoo-dono, how is Tsukiyomi-dono? Has his health improved? I have visited before, but has there been a change in his condition?”(Verdandi)

After seeing Susanoo, the situation no longer causes Verdandi any concern, and she becomes entirely relaxed and proceeds to ask about Tsukiyomi. She has always been like this.

“That visit was truly unexpected. As a visit from one of the sisters of Norn, it made a big scene from the top to the very bottom. My Aniki is fine. He is currently sleeping and recovering.”(Susanoo)

“Well, that is good news. We met each other during a god gathering, and he helped me greatly during that time. I would very much like you to thank him for me.”(Verdandi)

Every single word that comes from her mouth relaxes the atmosphere in the room. They had just barged into the World Tree, but from the conversation now, it does not look like that at all.

“No, no, actually the reason I am here concerns that meeting. You had said to my brother at that time, that if he was ever in trouble, you would help. I will be

using that favor right now.”(Susanoo)

“Verd Onee-sama, did you really say such a thing?”(Skuld)

“Yes, Skuld. He really did help me a lot there.”(Verdandi)

“You always do things so freely ... Even though that day you went to that meeting, Skuld and I almost died from overwork ... But it is fine, I understand that this is just a rowdy visit and not a raid on us.”(Urd)

The elder sister Urd is amazed that Verdandi made such a promise and she accepts the visit of three gods. Well, Urd actually has no choice because even though Urd is the older one, the amount of work Verdandi does far surpasses both her and Skuld combined. Thus, she is more lenient towards her little sister Verdandi.

“To come all the way over here to the World Tree ... Susanoo, you really do not have any tact.”(Athena)

“Athena, this is just preparations and nothing more. Do not worry, I will take you there as well.”(Susanoo)

“I do appreciate that, but I understand that I am still lacking in-terms of you two people. I understand there are still things we must do before we depart.”(Athena)

“What is the matter you want to speak about? We will hear it and then decide. I believe Susanoo would like to continue on with the discussion?”(Skuld)

Skuld interrupts the conversation between the gods and then sighs from them going off topic.

“Oh, this little one still has big mouth but knows how to get to the point nicely.”(Susanoo)

“... Stupid father* acting stupidly great.”(Skuld)

TInote: This is Skuld insulting Susanoo, they are no way related.

“Hmm?”(Susanoo)

“Nothing.”(Skuld)

“Okay then ... I want to ask Urd about a certain boy. I would like as much information about him as possible please.”(Susanoo)

“What is the boy’s name?”(Urd)

“Misumi Makoto. He is a human child that is somewhat related to the reason why my brother is in his current predicament.”(Susanoo)

The moment Susanoo mentions the name, the expressions of the three sister changes. This surprises Susanoo since they shouldn’t care or be knowledgeable about any humans in particular.

“What, do you already know the boy? If there are children that interest you in another culture, you must follow the proper procedures when asking to observe them.”(Susanoo)

“It is as Susanoo says ... In fact, I did not hear of that name until I heard it from Susanoo. Who is this boy to make your faces change like that?”(Daikokuten)

“No, it is not like that. He is a unusual child that had a peculiar upbringing, and Skuld was interested in this child, thus, I wanted to check on him as well.”(Urd)

“Yes, I did not think I would hear the name Misumi Makoto from you.”(Skuld)

Skuld is honestly surprised when hearing this name from them. Her eyes spread out a little more, and they can tell she is not lying either.

Verdandi also seems to be aware of the name and heard about him from her sister.

“That boy is from another world though. Did my brother tell you about him, little Skuld?”(Susanoo)

“Do not say little. Even if he is from another world, his fate thread was given to us when he was born in this world, and he was able to grab hold of his true talent forcibly ...”(Skuld)

Skuld struggles to explain the situation of Misumi Makoto.

“Why are you tongue tied Skuld? I remember you saying this cheat boy was truly funny?”(Verdandi)

“Verd Onee-sama ... I was trying to explain without using that word.”(Skuld)

“Cheat boy ... Did he defy the physical boundaries of fate?”(Susanoo)

Susanoo picks up on the word Verdandi says and then urges Skuld to explain.

“Well, it is a bit different than a cheat really.”(Verdandi)

“Yes ... first of all, he was actually supposed to die after his little sister was born, but this was evaded when he met a healer that had helped him. He did not notice the power of that person though.”(Skuld)

“A healer? To meet such a person is very rare, especially in the human world ... This is too much of a coincidence.”(Athena)

“Isn’t that right! As expected from the Goddess of War, Athena! I also thought that someone had been guiding his fate, thus, I followed his thread of fate. But it truly was just a coincidence, there was no trickery by anyone. He had escaped the fate of death by pure coincidence. This was worth the luck of at least five lifetimes! Thus, his thread of fate begin to spin itself again, and when I followed it to the future, it had transitioned into his former world. This is the reason I took an interest in this boy.”(Skuld)

“But to call this a cheat is slightly a bit too much. It is just pure luck, is it not?”(Daikokuten)

The god called Daikokuten doubts the words of Skuld and Verdandi when they describe the boy as a cheat. Even though he is taking the form of Daikokuten, he is actually the God of War in Hinduism. It is as he says, to say something is a cheat refers to obtaining unjust power that would defy the very laws of the world. It is a little too much to use that word to describe just avoiding the destiny of death by fortune.

“The cheat part comes from the talent he forcibly grabbed hold of.”(Skuld)

“Oh, you mean that.”(Susanoo)

“Everyone in this world is born with one or more talents at least. Misumi Makoto is no exception to this rule. He had been born with one talent, but it was a terrible frightening talent. He was not supposed to be able to awaken to that talent because of his premature death.”(Skuld)

“I heard about his talent from my brother. It is the ability to always hit a target. This will eventually become a physical law or a concept level ability. There is no level of accuracy that ability cannot reach. It was awoken when he took up archery.”(Susanoo)

Susanoo heard about Misumi Makoto’s ability from Tsukiyomi. The ability to concentrate, to concentrate and hit whatever you desire. According to his brother, this ability will eventually surpass the physical boundaries of the world itself. It is an excellent ability that is quite useful in a harsh world like this where human powers are difficult to manifest.

“No, it is a different talent than that. Him obtaining that talent is the reason I call him a cheat. He has one talent, meaning there is only one road he can take to awaken his talent. People actually do not always notice their talent and sometimes never awaken it either, but he is different. Misumi Makoto realized his talent. He became aware that he had this talent but then turned his eyes away from it. I do not know whether it was an intentional or unconscious decision. Maybe it was because that is not the talent he wanted.”(Verdandi)

“Why would one deny their talent while understanding it is their talent? What is this boy?”(Athena)

“Yes, exactly Athena. It was at a really young age, thus I doubt he remembers anymore. However, later on he encountered archery and became fond of it, but he does not have talent for archery at all. Misumi Makoto has no talent other than the talent he turned his eyes away from, but he is still pursuing archery and is walking on that path ... He is walking a road that has no end or direction.”(Skuld)

“To deny the single talent you are born with. Humans are truly pitiful beings.”(Susanoo)

Susanoo sympathizes with Misumi Makoto. He fell in love with archery, but sadly that love will never return to him. Of course, this is the talent he forcibly grasped.

“Well ... I do not have any right to sympathize with him. I was laughing at the little boy, but his talent was truly wonderful. Despite this, he still chose to go through the hardships of the other roads ... It is like a person with the talent

having a red carpet in front of him, but Misumi Makoto chose to ignore that carpet, go to thick wall in front of him, and keep hitting that wall with his bare hands. "(Skuld)

"What an awful example." (Athena)

Athena disliked the example Skuld gave to exemplify her point.

What is the talent being described in such a fashion? Athena originally did not have much interest in Misumi Makoto, but after hearing this, her interest towards his talents peaked.

"For people with multiple talents, they have many paths they may proceed down, and they can also return to the start and start a new path. However, this boy is very stubborn and would not go down that other path."(Skuld)

"I am not trying to defend my sister's example, but it is true. If only that child's stubbornness to look away from his talent hadn't been so steadfast. He would have left his name in the annals of history had he actually taken the time to cultivate it."(Urd)

Urd helps explain what Skuld is trying to say. Verdandi agrees with this point and nods.

"So the reason you had said cheat is because this boy defied this rule and obtained another talent through some unfair means."(Daikokuten)

Daikokuten looks convinced.

"Daikokuten-sama, as I said before, the word cheat is not the correct term."(Skuld)

"Oh, then how did Misumi Makoto obtained the talent he wanted?"(Daikokuten)

"This will not be written on the document I will give later but ... that boy ... just kept hitting it ... forever ... that thick wall ... forever and ever ... non-stop."(Urd)

"..."(Susanoo/Daikokuten/Athena)

"This is an absolutely pointless action and will never create any results, but that boy did not give up. Rather, I am sure he did not even have the conscious

choice to give up. I believe this concept does not exist in him. That is the reason he could keep doing archery so happily. Maybe he did not even have time to think about giving up because he was trying to so hard with his weak body. Eventually, his fate thread spun and created the talent for him. That big wall was broken down.”(Urd)

“To create a talent, can such a thing be even done!”(Daikokuten)

“It is impossible ... but there have been outliers in the past.”(Urd)

“There is a precedent?”(Daikokuten)

“There was Alexander the Great* in the past. In recent years it would be Hans Ulrich Rudel*. Both of these men were born with different talents and destinies as was this boy, and compared to this boy, their scale of destiny was also different. However, in those cases, they had rewritten their talents and avoided their original times of death. This is most likely the first time anyone has added a talent to himself.”(Urd)

TLnote: Alexander the Great, the great Greek Ruler of Macedon, Iskander from Fate/zero if you need another thing to remember by. Han Ulrich Rudel, a german Nazi pilot who was credited with eight victories in battles by himself, destroying 519 tanks and 800 other vehicles.

Susanoo, Daikokuten, Athena are silenced by the words said by Urd. They do not believe the Norn would lie in this situation. In other words, Misumi Makoto is someone who would greatly influence the world. They wonder why these three sisters did not inform the other gods about this person. Normally, if such a person exists, they would be closely watched by the gods.

“I understand your silence and thoughts. Why did we not share this information? Regardless of his future or his potential to influence the world and overturn his death, he is a normal person when all is said and done. He would not even an adult before he transferring back to his world. Thus, we did not feel the need to put him onto the list of closely observed humans.”(Verdandi)

Verdandi’s words answer their doubts. The information about this human was supposed to be shared among the gods if he was going to influence this world greatly, but they did not. It was not because of negligence, but a judgement

these three sisters made about Misumi Makoto regarding his influence on this world. It was in their power and within their discretion to do this.

“So, may I ask what is the reason you need the information regarding Misumi Makoto? I believe he should have already transferred to the other world already.”(Urd)

“Oh, yeah, that right? We are going to talk to that goddess over there. Me and my brother wants to know more about the child. Perhaps the destiny his thread is spinning has already been unraveled many times. Even though it is incredibly difficult to keep punching a wall that should not break and break it to grasp the talent behind it. From the point of view of people who govern fate, it is something close to a cheat. You may even say this is a foul, but now I am really interested in this kid. I do not hate stubborn kids who pursue something with all their might, hahaha.”(Susanoo)

Susanoo tries to laugh moderately since the place they are in is not the most appropriate place to have a very big laugh, but in the end, it still leaks through.

“Oh, then are you all going to that world? Even Athena is going to that world?”(Verdandi)

“It is truly embarrassing. That goddess, the work she is doing is truly unsightly thing as a god. I will quickly finish my business over there.”(Athena)

“Well, let us just leave it at that. I am curious though. What was Misumi Makoto’s original talent?”(Susanoo)

Susanoo asks Skuld a question. They learned how the boy obtained another talent, but they had not yet heard what the other talent he looked away from is.

Urd handed a piece of paper to Susanoo with a smile.

They all stare at the gold colored piece of paper. However, none of them seem to be surprised. This ability is within their range of expectation. They all close their eyes for a moment to ponder something.

The three gods who have their eyes closed for a moment open them, and you can see their eyelids tremble slightly.

“This is definitely ...”(Susanoo)

“Well, I can understand why a normal boy would divert his eyes from this.”(Athena)

“Yep, it would be hard to not turn your eyes away from this ability.”(Daikokuten)

The expressions on the three gods are complicated, and you could see that those words were filled with sympathy for Makoto.

“Do you understand the original talent Misumi Makoto had?”(Urd)

“Yeah, I am looking forward to the meeting. I am sorry for the rowdy arrival, as I said before, just make the complaint to me.”(Susanoo)

“No, I heard a very nostalgic name. I will pass it off as a causal visit. Please give him my regards.”(Skuld)

“Ok, let’ go to meeting that boy.”(Susanoo)

With Susanoo’s words, the other two gods leave. Silence returns to the World Tree Temple.

“What bad luck for that goddess. To take a person who can influence even the origin world into her own world.”(Verdandi)

“If you try to twist fate into your own hands, there will be a distortion somewhere along the way . If you keep doing this to accomplish misdeeds, even a god will fall from heaven.”(Urd)

“But I wonder why that matter requires one of the highest Goddesses of War and two of the top Gods of Destruction. I really wonder if her punishment will just be a punishment in the end.”(Skuld)

The subtle words of her sister make Skuld wonder what kind of punishment awaits that goddess. Those last words echo in the empty temple at the base of the World Tree.

Extra Story XII - A certain day in Asora ②

It has been roughly one year since we had come to live in this wonderful place. I have felt several times that all of this was just a dream and will wake up from it. But no matter what, I am always here, this was reality and not a dream.

I have always thought of reflecting over what has happened this past year, but I believe it will be hard to reflect on all of it in a single day. I remember the first time I met that person.

It was a normal day in those desolate lands when that man suddenly came to our village.

Shen was one of the superior dragons, the one who manipulates the fog of illusion combining the attributes of water and wind. It was an old dragon with a bit of whimsical nature, but it was very important one for us. I have heard stories from my father and grandfather that long ago, our ancestors asked it for protection in exchange for serving it for the rest of our lives. Since then our scales have become blue and we have acquired abilities close to or superior to dragons, even though we are just of the lizard group. Even in this harsh desolate environment, we are able to live adequately.

The superior dragon Shen has long fallen into a deep sleep. I believe it has been asleep for quite a while since both my father and grandfather did not have a chance to see Shen for themselves. Even though I have heard of its form and characteristics from the stories, I almost deemed it an enemy when it first appeared over our village.

“It has been awhile, my kin. Sorry for the sudden announcement, but we are moving.”(Tomoe)

Those were words that I had never expected. However, I wonder if it was an instinct as its kin? Just listening to those words and voice, I knew this person was Shen, our lord. Despite it being the first time I have heard this voice, I understood at first glance that it was our lord thus, I did not have any hesitation.

“I understand, we shall prepare.”(Mist Lizard)

I answered the lord, I did not know if my words would reach him. The figure in the sky faded away; I panicked a bit when it disappeared suddenly. I knew I was not daydreaming since everyone else in the village was looking up towards the sky because they heard the voice.

“Oh, thanks for the immediate response, are you the current chief of the village?”(Tomoe)

“?!”(Mist Lizard)

I suddenly heard a voice come from behind, I turned around to see it.

I saw a girl with blue hair, it was a hyuman being. It laughed quite fearlessly. But I did not make the same mistake twice because from the voice I could tell who she is.

“Lord, is that you?”(Mist Lizard)

“Yes, I am Shen, your lord, because of certain circumstances I have decided to go on a journey. I am in this form due to the fact I have signed a contract with a hyuman child. Although it was mirrored, I put my previous form in the sky through my powers in case you would not recognize me. But I guess showing that form was unnecessary, thank you for your quick response.”(Tomoe)

“I thank you for the kind words, Although we do not have many people here, we still number around 100, please give us time to prepare for the move.”(Mist Lizard)

“That is not necessary, just gather all the people and meet me outside around this time tomorrow. I will explain the situation later. Please inform everyone of this and I will come back tomorrow.”(Tomoe)

“Yes, my lord.”(Mist Lizard)

“Hehe, your generation is very lucky, the journey I am going on will be very exciting.”(Tomoe)

That was my first conversation with Lord Shen. It was a very short conversation that just discussed the matter and nothing more. However, those last words resonate within me even to this day.

After that, as we were told, we readied ourselves and awaited lord Shen. She had come. In the next moment, a fog covered all of us. Instantly our environment changed from a desolate wasteland to green plains with grass and tree as far as the eye can see. The house moved along with us and did not change in position. Although I was chief, I recalled that all my thoughts had stopped for a moment. I understand that it was impossible to grow without failure but even to this today, I find myself sighing at how pathetic I was at that time.

It was not the familiar cracked ground but a lush land. It was not the barren land without grass but a rich landscape with trees that surrounded us and blocked our visibility. This was a very good land to inhabit was what Lord Shen said. What kind of blessing was this?

It seems that this land already has people living on it, the highland Orc, they are not kin of Lord Shen but they seem to deeply respect her. I have heard that the magic power they possess was much higher and magic skill wise, they are more versatile than us. I had thought they were also brought to this land by Lord Shen, but it seems that they followed the hyuman child Lord Shen has a contract with.

There were also Elder Dwarves. They were excellent craftsmen who created outstanding armor and weapons. They were able to construct weapons that bestow abilities upon the user, they were a tribe that was well admired even by our people. It was lucky that they will live with us.

We were actually prepared to fight with Lord Shen's contractor if the contract was made unjustly. We were going to fight to our last lizard, but the possibility of that happening was low given Lord Shen's attitude and behavior.

It was as we thought, the child.....Waka-sama was different.

But Lord She— I mean Tomoe-sama was cruel to say that person was a hyuman child.

He had a very relaxed face and the amount of Magic power that he was giving off was something I have never seen before, it was dripping down from his whole body. When I first laid eyes upon him, all thoughts of fighting him had disappeared. Also, we were able to see that Tomoe-sama was not put under the

contract unjustly, she laughs and speaks in a formal tone with him of her own volition.

I think the moment I realized the person in front of me was not a hyuman child was because of the other person with him. It was a black-haired woman who had the power to rival even Tomoe-sama. I knew that we could not beat the other woman, no matter what. To put both people under a contract was something a hyuman can never do.

Besides, he also had talked to not only us but all the other races in their native tongue. That was outrageous. We held a conference at night and decided to proceed to call him Waka-sama.*

Tlnote: this is where they officially call him Waka-sama but I like to stick with Waka-sama throughout the story since it is always that name.

Later on, Tomoe-sama had told us that Waka-sama was not hyuman but a Human. I do not know what a Human is, but if all Humans are like Waka-sama then I will be very afraid of that race. We were told after thinking of that, that Waka-sama was special and not all Humans are like him.

In this place, we cooperated with the Highland Orcs, Elder Dwarves, and Alkey to build a town here in this land.

We also wanted daily battle training and thus sent a proposal for it, it was approved very fast.

Originally, I thought the quality of training we would have here would decline due to the peaceful environment, but that was a needless concern. If we wanted to go outside to the wasteland then we were immediately allowed to do so. Sometimes Tomoe-sama and Mio-sama would participate in the training. We were able to try out various types of fighting styles and think of new ways to organize ourselves for battles that may happen in the future. Also, when Waka-sama participates in training with us, it becomes more of a game of dodging his attacks rather than a battle or spar. The things that person does always has abnormal accuracy and incredible power. Tomoe-sama says that his operational magical power was in fact, very low. He does not have the right spell or catalyst to use his immense magic power, thus if we properly defend with our lives at stake, we will survive somehow. I do want to take one his

attacks head-on someday but right now, I do not have any sort of countermeasures for it. That person was a walking country destroyer, even his bare-handed attacks were incredibly powerful. Currently, we are still looking for a way to deal with his attacks, but none other than dodging comes to mind.

Every day was the same peaceful day, the same routine of training and laboring to build the town. I wonder if it was for this reason that incident happened.

In Asora, the first death by battle appeared. Although we are always have been prepared to die on the battlefield, hearing of our colleague's death in this wonderful environment was a great shock. The death of the highland Orc due to the rampage of a hyuman adventurer.

It was due to Waka-sama and Tomoe-sama's idea that Asora had a hyuman inside it. Tomoe-sama's split body was also destroyed and she herself had sustained some injuries as well. Waka-sama blamed himself for this incident. I have always felt that Waka-sama was too much like a young child, he has so much power but was unaware of it or rather, does not want it. I believe it was his innocence and gentleness that made him unique, but it was also a fact that those traits made him slightly careless. I do believe he has a perception of his position though, he himself had eliminated the hyuman.

However, the people who should have been the most attentive in this case was us Mist Lizards. We have to always be on guard like in the wasteland. We have let ourselves get too relaxed. I gathered everyone and scolded our entire tribe including me.

Waka-sama ordered me to guard the city and patrol Asora. He said we should not guard in a military fashion, but rather police the streets and patrol. The chief of this force was, of course, Waka-sama, but he has placed Tomoe-sama as his representative to take care of matters if he was away. I wondered if he thought about our origins and placed Tomoe-sama to be our leader because of this. We hurriedly reformed and carried out the work he had presented us.

The young one in our tribe wanted the same type of sword as Tomoe-sama. I do agree with its beauty and sharpness but it takes time to get used to. I am quite at a loss of whether I should allow it. I, personally do want it as well

but.....

The elder dwarves send us a message about the equipment we requested for repairs and says they are finished. Our Mist Lizards weapons are fully made by the elder dwarves, I truly cannot thank them enough. As warriors who train and fight all the time, our armor and weapons are in constant damage. But with the elder dwarves helping us now, we have been able to effectively use these weapons and armor to their full extent. Recently though, I believe they have been having a tough time with the demands of Tomoe-sama.

Elder dwarves spoke about the sword for Tomoe-sama and our young one requested that sword as well without even discussing it with me. It was a truly deplorable fact, they left their chief out of this moment in our tribe's history to obtain the same weapon as our lord.

The sword was called a Katana and apparently, they are having trouble with making it. However, since Tomoe-sama desires it and they have obtained some advice from Waka-sama to create the sword and have some success in getting the shape. Tomoe-sama was really happy with the final product they have made and was full of smiles when she was holding that weapon.

However, the Katana was a weapon that can only be used by a skilled swordsman. It was not just any weapon, it had its own character. I have selected a few individuals to try it out and they had failed miserably. The maintenance for the Katana was very costly and was a weapon that had to be carefully crafted. They broke some of the katanas in the process, I apologized to the elder dwarves. The dwarves did not mind and actually wanted us to test the weapons in practice battles since I am also interested in the weapon called a Katana, I agreed with the suggestion.

We did a training session with the Forest Oni. The session was observed by Komoe-sama, Tomoe-sama's new split body. Mio-sama was also there. To be honest, they were not that strong. I think my standard of measuring strength must have been skewed because of always seeing Waka-sama. They had great agility, but we were higher in both strength and skill. We were both skilled in magic equally and if it was attack magic, they had an upper hand, but we had the upper hand in defensive magic. Though this did not matter since they had an attack method called breath. Also, we are conducting this training session

with unit based battle, not 1v1. Their leader Mondo seemed to have prohibited an ability of their, I am guessing it was a dangerous ability, thus they must not use it Asora. I will have to keep this in mind for next time.

We had the opportunity to fight two Forest Oni.....that was truly a deplorable match. I could not believe this was the same Forest Oni who had been attending to customers every day. What happened to her to make her become like that. I judged we had been severely lacking in training and started over again. If we dilly dally too much we must face the TM boot camp. Thus I had ordered everyone to do 3 times the regular training.

We had gotten a strange proposal from Waka-sama. He wanted a warrior who would help him train. I said we would gather the entire tribe for that but he declined and told us that he need just 1 person. I wanted to introduce the best warrior we have but again he declined and said he needed a low level warrior.

It seems we are to be helping out with some hyumans training. I wondered if any of those low level warriors will meet Waka-sama standards.....

From my experience as chief and as a trainer for the tribe, I have learned that using excellent talents are the best way to train other individuals. I do not know what Waka-sama has in mind though. I went with my experience and introduced our second best warrior as a low level warrior since I had already introduced our best warrior. I do not know what kind of training method or form Waka-sama will have but I know that if the person you are training with has doubt in their heart, the other people will be affected by it as well. I have learned from Tomoe-sama that sometimes blindly listening will not be helpful and use the experience to be more helpful to him.

We seem to have expanded and obtained new residents in Asora. The winged people with a flying ability and a tribe called Gorgon with a powerful petrifying ability. They both have incredible numbers, but they have both accepted the terms and conditions of living in Asora. We have never had any training with fighting flying opponents thus, I am quite looking forward to that. Apparently, the Gorgon ability for petrification was even dangerous to the residents here, Shiki-sama who was another follower of Waka-sama was working on a solution with the elder dwarves.

The chief of the winged people visited us for a greeting. Her tone and voice was soft, but the air around her was dignified. We had quite the meaningful time when I suggested a joint training session. She was also surprised by many of my responses when she asked the living standard here. Unlike us Mist Lizard, she wanted to help in the administration or management in Asora. I think it would be a good thing if they can help Ema-dono and work in the administration part where the highland Orcs were struggling due to lack of people.

They have yet to touch upon the true wonder of Asora which was Waka-sama and his followers. That realization and surprise will no doubt be the strongest, I want to spectate that reaction if possible.

Two people from the Gorgon came to greet. I was with Shiki-sama. I was required to test whether we can achieve resistance without her glasses. Among all the people here besides Waka-sama's group, I had the highest resistance towards abnormal conditions. I, who was in full armor and a girl gorgon who were glasses were facing each other. I said I was ready and she took off her glasses. I started to feel a strange sensation that suppressed my body, I instantly release the magic power I had stored in my body to disable this effect. This was the most common method to restore your body to normal from abnormal effects. The suppression effect quickly came back, this was quite troublesome. If I do not always keep up the resistance, I will be swallowed huh?

We tried other equipment and did some other experiments. At some point, my consciousness disappeared. I woke up to see Shiki-sama and the girl apologizing to me. I got petrified huh? It was quite the power I must say; it was good for training to always be on guard and always be on your foot. If you relax even for a second you will lose.

I said there was no need for an apology and enjoy more times with talking with the winged people. Waka-sama was immune to the petrification effects and can even restore objects that have been petrified and make sure they do not petrify again. I think he has learned some abilities and a few small things in the academy while teaching. It was encouraging that he was training and growing his powers. He still does not have the perception of him being a king or a ruler but his training with the bow and attitude towards that are superb I

must say. I do believe he was in control of his own power and was doing some tests to use his power more efficiently as well.

By the way, the Gorgon tribe had come to us to ask about our biological process. Do we engage in activities involving men and women, I had said we do but we are born from eggs. I wonder if this will be useful as a reference to the gorgon who had the same biological structure as hyumans. Our body sizes were also very different. We were asked at the end if we desired their bodies, but I could only give them flattery and nothing more. They were as beautiful as this land, but we do not feel any sexual desire towards them. They seemed to have a pained expression, but this was not something I can change or control, if our tribe people desired you I would have said it.

I must say, I have experienced a lot of things in my year here in Asora. It was very different from that monotone life I lived back at the wasteland.

Well, I believe I should write this down in a book. A young dwarf had also done this and I shall use his book as a reference of how to proceed in this matter. I do want to record my event but it was quite the tedious work. However, this year was filled with too many happy memories not to record. I hope to continue living here and let my children know of my experiences here.

Extra Story XIII - A certain day in Kuzunoha

There's a girl walking around the market.

That girl has brown skin color and her ears and eyes had traits that resembled that of elves.

At first, I couldn't believe that view. The reason is simple. This market is a place made by hyumans for hyumans.

Who knows what will be done to her if she were to recklessly enter here. Even if she came here under the orders of someone, or she explains that she has the permission, their treatment would be far from that between hyumans.

The hyumans were calling her out as if she were a fellow hyuman, and she responded to them while raising her hand. I was simply watching that sight with my mouth open. It is true that, compared to me, her features are closer to a hyuman. But that treatment is definitely weird.

"A company armband?"

There was a blue armband around the shoulders of that girl's clothing, so I ended up unconsciously saying it out loud.

She enters and leaves the market like normal, moreover, she works at a company? Impossible, I have never heard of that!

Normally, I would have felt jealousy at that. But for the current me, that was something of no importance right now. I was wondering about how to enter the market, and that girl will definitely be of use.

I continue observing her.

She was truly doing normal shopping. Exchanging casual talk, I couldn't feel discrimination at all in their words. What in the world happened to make such a thing possible?

Her shopping must have finished. She leaves the market. I decide to tail her without a moment of hesitation. Erasing my presence is my specialty within specialties. Moreover, our race has high physical ability. Most tailings can be

done until the end without having the other party notice.

The shadows of buildings, the crowds, and blind spots; by using all of those, I follow the brown girl. If she goes to a place where there's no people, I can talk to her, and if she is returning home, I can gain a variety of information from that. I steel myself until then.

We were now at the main street. This is good luck. It is daytime, so there's quite a lot of people in the main street. Just concentrating for a little bit to erase my presence was enough.

After walking for a bit, she entered a building. Looks like a store.

Does she work there?

If I remember correctly, the stores at that area had failed not that long ago and were currently in sale. Maybe they have been sold and are now back in business. In that case, it shouldn't have been long since they opened.

Oh well, let's investigate that later. For now, I will remember the name of that store, and if I can enter, I will check out what kind of store it is.

...It is a store that faces the main street, and there's practically no stores that allow the entry of demi-humans, so my expectations are without doubt low.

I move slowly to the front of the store.

At the top of the entrance, there should be the name of the store written there. There was a wooden sign there. It is indeed there, but I can't read it. It is written in quite the difficult to read letters. Even I who am uneducated know that this isn't regular writing.

"That's the sign of the store, right? Is it really okay to not know it?"

"It says Kuzunoha."

"I see, Kuzunoha. I can't tell what kind of store it is with that name."

"It is not a drug store. It is an anything-goes store; a general goods store? Well, there's medicine, food, and repairs for equipment."

"...It makes it harder and harder to understand what this store wants to do."

"The same goes for you."

“Eh?”

When I look back, the girl that I was tailing was there. On top of that, at her side, there's a tall slender woman. The same brown skin.

The same demi-human race?

This is the first time my back has been taken so easily.

Damn it, this is bad. Uneasiness is running through my whole body.

“We haven't even met once and I am already getting tailed. It has already passed the passionate stage and entering the creepy one.”

“Eris, it is because you wander around the market. Even though Waka-sama and the others have said that we should increase our exposure little by little.”

“If I did something like that, I would be wearing only panties by the end of the summer, Akua.” (Eris)

“...Listen seriously.” (Akua)

“Waka is too careful. Hyumans are as easy to deal with as twirling them around the tip of our fingers. Those bitches that quickly jump onto you just by giving them a little delicious bait—” (Eris)

“You see, Eris, leaving aside Waka, Shiki-sama has a certain amount of freedom to change the employees of this store, you know?” (Akua)

“Ah!” (Eris)

“I accidentally ended up eavesdropping on a conversation between Waka-sama and Shiki-sama, you see. You understand what I am getting at, right? With a single error, we might end up returning

‘there’.” (Akua)

“Oh...Ooooh...” (Eris)

“Looks like you understand. Then, let's report this guy to Waka-sama. And let's apologize. You don't want to return to that camp—” (Akua)

“Camp! Camp is scary! Scary scary scary.....” (Eris)

It looks like the small one is beginning to show PTSD.

The tall one lowers her fist onto the head of the small one along with a sigh.

The blank eyes, that looked as if she were under the effects of drugs, disappeared with the shock of the pain. Good. Looks like she isn't actually doing drugs.

"Ah! Thanks, Akua. I was about to be killed by my trauma." (Eris)

"At any rate, we have to move immediately. Let's act at once. We have to maintain this haven." (Akua)

"Roger! Oi you, resisting is pointless, so be obedient. If you stay obedient, we probably won't do anything bad." (Eris)

Oi, what's with that probably.

While feeling uneasy, I was brought into what the two called as the Kuzunoha Company.

"A big cat?!"

"Huh?"

"A-Ah, excuse me. This is the first time I meet a cat demi-human, you see. Nice to meet you, I am the owner of this company, name's Raidou." (Raidou)

"Thanks for the courteous greeting. I am a demi-human living in the slums of this Academy Town, my name's Bor. I am honored to meet you." (Bor)

"And so, why did you tail Eris?" (Raidou)

"...Before that, I have a single question I want to ask no matter what!" (Bor)

Seeing the demi-human that the two Forest Onis brought with them, the owner of the Kuzunoha Company, Raidou, accidentally lets out his voice in surprise.

He has seen many demi-humans since coming to this town.

In other words, he was already used to meeting people that were not hyumans, but he didn't have immunity towards the demi-human that called himself Bor.

Putting it in words, Bor is a cat standing on his two feet.

His face was close to that of a hyuman and the hair in his whole body is thin, but the ears were not at the sides, they were at the top like that of a cat, and his eyes and nose were closer to that of a cat rather than a hyuman. In this moment when he is meeting with Raidou, his nose has been twitching every now and then, as if chasing after scents.

Raidou's gaze was pinned at the thin and glossy white hair that was covering his hand.

Raidou is a cat lover —and a pretty big one.

"Okay...if it is something that I can answer." (Raidou)

Even with the desperate expression of Bor, Raidou was incredibly interested in whether Bor has paws or not.

"How did a demi-human like you become a merchant in Rotsgard?! You...You are the miracle of demi-humans!!" (Bor)

"Geh!!" (Raidou)

"....."

Bor and Raidou were facing each other with a table between them. The two Forest Onis that had brought Bor here were also standing by at the back though.

The bare emotional words of Bor made the two of them laugh out loud. Raidou also showed a bitter face and was troubled in how to respond.

"Please! Tell me!" (Bor)

"Uhm, Bor-san." (Raidou)

"Yes!" (Bor)

"You see..." (Raidou)

"Yes!!" (Bor)

"...Even if I look like this, I am a hyuman." (Raidou)

"Yes?!" (Bor)

“I am hyuman.” (Raidou)

“Wa, eh?” (Bor)

“It looks like I gave you false hopes there. Uhm, sorry after all that praise.”
(Raidou)

“Hyuman? You are? ...Ah, uhm, my condolences.” (Bor)

“Thanks...” (Raidou)

The awkward exchange ended.

A silent atmosphere takes place.

“Bor, do something about this atmosphere.” (Eris)

The one who cut through this atmosphere was Eris.

“Eh?! Ah, yes.” (Bor)

“Sorry for the rudeness of my employee. Well then, can I please hear the reason why you tailed my employee.” (Raidou)

“Understood. Ah, you see, I...” (Bor)

“Feel free to talk as you please. I speak in this way by nature, so there’s no need to match me.” (Raidou)

“Thanks for the consideration. As I said before, I live in the slums. And so, there has been a little problem there and it will get bad if we don’t obtain goods by this season.” (Bor)

Even when the talk begins, it was content that didn’t make a clear point.

Raidou tried to ask for more details, but no words came out regarding that.

“You see, Bor, say everything at once. If you don’t finish before Shiki-sama returns, it will definitely turn a little bad.” (Eris)

Contrary to the lightness of the words and expression of Eris, it seemed as if she were hurried.

She had a personal reason and was clearly fearing a person that evaluated things in a stricter way than her master Raidou.

Just a few moments ago, she directed a piercing gaze at Bor and his whole

body shivered.

“I-I will speak!” (Bor)

“Bor-san, about the slum; if I remember correctly, I heard that there’s no slums here though.” (Raidou)

Raidou took the lead over the resolve of Bor.

When Raidou went to greet the Merchant Guild and was searching for the articles companies use, he asked about the districts of Rotsgard. In the explanation of the Academy Town, there was no slum district, so Raidou didn’t understand the place Bor called slum.

“There’s...a slum. The amount of demi-humans in Rotsgard is small, and most of them are treated as slaves or something close to that. The real few that don’t fall in that category have no decent jobs and live depending on others. They can’t rent a decent house, so they have no choice but to live in a place that’s basically abandoned. It is illegal usage, but the place itself has little value of use, so it is tolerated. That is the slum.” (Bor)

“The usual huh. In the first place, the demi-humans that flatter the humans are making the humans get even more arrogant. Learn a bit from the demons.” (Eris)

“...Eris, shut up. Bor-san, continue.” (Raidou)

“And so, well, we are somehow managing to live by, but this time it is big. Do you know about the curse diseases?” (Bor)

The words of Bor made the brows of Raidou rise.

Curse disease; one of the triggers for Raidou to become a merchant.

“We are a company that deals with medicine after all.” (Raidou)

“Then there’s no need to explain. If it were a normal disease, we would be able to use magic or medicines to deal with it. But that one disease needs an elixir that is properly made in order to cure it. It looks like one of my comrades has ended up with a curse disease, you see.” (Bor)

“Do you know its level?” (Raidou)

“I also know the name of the disease. Level is three, and it is the infectious type; name’s Nail Drang. It mainly infects demi-humans and it is especially strong towards beast type of demi-humans and the symptoms are also heavier. A feeling of drunkenness and a deterioration of your physical strength; if left alone, depending on the case, it might cause death. For the demi-humans that are of a different category, it is not that infectious, but there’s mostly beast types within our comrades, so...” (Bor)

“Nail Drang. If it has a name, it must mean it is a known curse disease huh. If it infects demi-humans, then if it is me—” (Raidou)

“Waka! We are thinking of redeeming ourselves here for allowing someone to tail us!” (Eris)

“*Ourselves’?!*” (Akua)

Akua reacts to the sudden statement of Eris. She turned her head to the side at incredible speed.

“Wait, he said that it infects demi-humans.” Raidou)

“Leave it to us! No, leave it to *me*

! Yeah, I will do something about it, so I want to make it so I am guilt free of the recent outings I have made!” (Eris)

“Your real reason is spilling out grandly. You are truly a pitiful girl among pitiful girls...” (Raidou)

Raidou looks at Eris in amazement while saying this reality twice.

Bor was simply watching this scene with serious eyes.

He felt surprise over the strange hyuman and brown demi-humans that are trying to help him as if it were natural.

“If this Bor was in the market, it must mean that the goods for the medicine are being sold, or that he knows the recipe for it. And the Kuzunoha Company doesn’t have the treatment for the curse disease. In other words, this is an important job to benefit the company. This meeting was a heaven-sent!” (Eris)

“Uhm, I also request to help. Please give me the chance to redeem.” (Akua)

“.....Hah...Understood. Then, don’t forget to properly report the money you have used. Also, make sure not to affect the preparations of the company. I will be telling the Arkes about this later, so quickly resolve this, okay?” (Raidou)

“?! You are going to help out?! Why?!” (Bor)

“I hate curse diseases. Also, I am having impure thoughts of having you owe me one and relying on you at a later time. I am a merchant after all.” (Raidou)

Raidou was loose-lipped. A debt of gratitude is heavier than money. That is his way of thinking. But that is a way of thinking that’s pretty rare in this world and few understand it.

It seems like understanding the true meaning of those words would be at a later time for Bor.

Bor looked with doubtful eyes at the hyuman that was saving a demi-human on the meager reason of having Bor owe him one.

“Bor, permission has been granted. I will resolve it immediately. Let’s go.” (Eris)

“I will help as well. At worst, if one of us gets infected, we can serve as test subjects, so it isn’t that bad of a thing. If there’s medicine in the market, there’s no problem after all. And so, Waka-sama, excuse us.” (Akua)

“Do well. I will tell Shiki that I have left you with work. By the way, if you mess up, I will report it to Tomoe.” (Raidou)

“Hih! We will be taking our leave!!” (Eris)

Akua and Eris jumped at the name of Tomoe and reacted heavily.

For the Forest Onis, the name of Tomoe seemed to make them recall something that is embedded deep in their hearts.

The Forest Onis drag Bor out as they leave.

Raidou sees this off.

“Camp; looks like they were quite wringed out there. It works quite well..... At any rate, the paws...it still bothers me.” (Raidou)

“This is...rough.”

“To think we two would get infected... Bor is fine, so why? We got our hands on the medicine, so wouldn’t it have been fine if we had given it to the Arkes immediately and had them mass-produce it?”

“There was no assurance that the medicine actually worked. There was the need to confirm this with our own eyes. The stores that lacked the inventory are at fault; they are all at fault. The ill are not to be blamed, so we are not at fault.”

“Uuuh, I feel like vomiting. Let’s quickly have them make the medicine and get cured, Eris.”

Two people were fumbling as if they had lost their sense of balance.

The special space that’s also their home, Asora. To bring Bor there would be way too careless, so Akua and Eris headed to where the Arkes were on their own.

The two went to the market to buy medicine. It wasn’t the recipe but the actual thing that was lined up in the store, but sadly, there were only few in stock, so without much choice, they decided on saving one as a sample and the remaining ones, they had Bor take them to the slum together with them.

The effects properly showed and the demi-human girl that was bed-ridden and groaning was letting out low breaths now. Feeling the curse disease’s presence disappear, the two Forest Onis were relieved and tried to take the medicine sample to Asora to mass-produce it, but the moment they left the room, the two staggered and leaned on the wall.

That’s right, the two of them had been infected. Even when they are not beast demi-humans who have the high infection rate. Whether it was unlucky or was divine punishment, no one truly knew.

“Nice coming here, test subjects.”

“...I already have no energy to refute. Treatment, please. This is the medicine sample.” (Akua)

Akua decided on leaving Eris, who was leaning on the wooden wall of the

house, on her own and gives the medicine bottle to the Arke that had come out after opening the door.

“This is the one huh. It apparently has plenty enough effect, right?” (Arke)

“It has been confirmed. There was luckily a previous case under the disease and it worked. We have already confirmed that the magic formation of the curse disease disappeared.” (Akua)

“Good work..... But the medicine that hyumans create is quite rough. There's way too many people that don't understand the art of making medicine. In the first place, elixirs are...” (Arke)

The Arke begins to mutter with bottle in hand. The pondering of his vast knowledge towards medicine continued. This contained incredibly difficult topics and any magician, no matter if they are not specialized in medicine, would want to hear about. However, sadly to say, this was nothing but torture to the two who were listening to that.

“I-I am sorry. Can you please hurry on the creation of the medicine? There's a few more diseased.” (Akua)

“Right... Hmph, we are talking about you people here. This was probably a job you took because you were worried about your own position. Listen well, in the first place, the thankful position of being close to Waka-sama's side is something that even Mio-sama...” (Arke)

Akua did her best to join in on the conversation, but the topic changed and a lecture began. If their strength were higher than that of him, it would still be possible for something to be done, but fighting an Arke even when the two are in full strength was on a level where they would barely be able to hang on. The chances of winning are incredibly low.

“...Geez, I will give you a banana, so please spare us already...” (Eris)

“That yellow fruit huh. Don't need it. But this medicine, with a little tinkering, it might be quite the interesting ingredient. Wait for a bit. I don't mind if you sleep around here.” (Arke)

The heartbreaking proposal of Eris was easily kicked away.

Leaving words that were slightly different from consent and more ominous than that, the Arke returned inside and began to prepare his medicine manufacturing equipment.

In the end, he minutely calculated the cost of the medicine with its effectiveness, and after finishing medicine after medicine in a trial and error that took practically a whole night, by the time he finished one that was satisfying for him, the Forest Onis were in agony over how bad they felt and were rolling around with eyes that looked as if they were dead.

“Look, I have changed the liquid into an easy to bring around pill, and on top of that, it is now possible to create four times more of the medicine with the same price of the current medicine production cost. Also, the time it takes to recover has reduced from two days for full recovery to one day. It also creates anti-pathogens for future infections. Yeah, quite the great result. Now then, on to make the production process simpler. Wait for a bit more—” (Arke)

The Arke shows a bottle that was twice as big as the bottle Akua had given him before, around the size of a canned coffee. He showed a satisfied expression while looking at the pills inside.

““Please wait!!””

The two let out desperate voices.

“...What? I am on a roll here, you know.” (Arke)

“That bottle, please give it to us first.... We might be at our limits.” (Akua)

“Ah, I forgot. There were sick people.” (Arke)

The Arke begins to ponder after he clearly didn't see Akua and Eris, who were breaking down in front of him, as sick people before.

“Waka-sama has also said to prepare it as soon as possible. Can't be helped. Let's leave the manufacturing simplification for later and deliver the finished product.” (Arke)

“!!”

“Here you go. There's suffering demi-humans, right? Bring it to them.” (Arke)

““Thank you very much!””

Receiving the bottle as if they were stealing it away, the two Forest Onis made weak moves, that were unnatural for the usually quick-footed two, and returned to Rotsgard.

They already drunk the medicine, but it will take one day to recover, so it is not as if they will be at full strength immediately. Even so, they can't just wait until recovery. They still have a duty to perform after all.

It was clear that this job had become a lot more tough than they thought. This bad feeling of drunkenness was the same as moving for the whole day after all.

The reason why they don't throw the towel even with that was because, compared to the days of demi-human training, their job in the store at Rotsgard was leaps and bounds more pleasant.

Returning to the slum, they explain the medicine that changed shape to Bor. After having him take a pill as well, they distribute the medicine to everyone in the slum.

The next day, the effects of it were showing remarkably.

Bor brought a few influential people of the slums with him to the Kuzunoha Company, that was still preparing to open store, in order to give their thanks.

Just like this, the first actual incident that the Forest Onis faced in Rotsgard had safely lowered its curtains. Akua and Eris staying in Rotsgard even after that and they are somehow doing well.

This connection created from the slum, in time, would turn into part of the Kuzunoha Company for night stealth operations in Rotsgard.

The actual members of this are Lime, Akua, Eris, and the teacher of the two Forest Onis, Mondo, that sometimes comes to Rotsgard as well.

Shiki is the one that manages this, and at times, the residents of the slum serve as eyes, ears, and limbs.

In time, the slums will have proper facilities and will be acknowledged as an official district of Rotsgard. It will serve as a symbol of the better treatment towards the demi-humans in the Academy Town, but that's a story for another time.

Even in places where Raidou -Misumi Makoto-is not deeply involved, the Kuzunoha Company began to spread its name.

Extra Story XIV - A certain day with Ema

“Let’s continue tomorrow.”

“Yes.”

The noise created from writing and papers resounded.

In this room that is around the size of 20 tatami mats <33 m²>, the voice of a girl reverberated.

After a small space of time, several voices return a response.

The place is Asora; a vast world that was created from the meeting between the high schooler Misumi Makoto that came from Earth and the Superior Dragon Shen that was sleeping at the World’s Border.

In this place where it has a pretty similar environment from a part of Makoto’s world, there’s currently a variety of races living there. Within those, the one who announced the end of the work was a female highland orc, one of the first races to migrate to Asora.

“Ema, you are going to stay? Want me to help?”

“It is okay, Kiko. What remains are things that I personally want to hurry about. You can leave with everyone.” (Ema)

“Is it maybe about Waka-sama’s personal lessons? I heard that the amount of spells you can use has increased an incredible deal. I would like a share of that.” (Kiko)

“It would be great if that were the case. I think I will be able to show everyone after a bit more, so wait until then.” (Ema)

“Missed huh. My intuition is dulling~. Ah right, today we have a drinking party together with the Elder Dwarfs and the Arke-samas!” (Kiko)

“A drinking party? What do you do in that?” (Ema)

“It is a light hearted banquet. Hyumans call it that way apparently. Waka-sama said so.” (Kiko)

“I see. Make sure not to drink too much. There’s a mountain of work that has to be sorted tomorrow after all.” (Ema)

“I know. Compared to the people that are out doing investigation or hunting, we who do office work are having it easy. No need to worry, I won’t slack. I heard that, yesterday, a big wild boar appeared and injured several people. The first time I saw a hunted wild boar, looking at the fangs and fur that seemed like they were weak, I thought that it was an easy hunt, but magic barely affects it and its physical strength is high, so it is actually quite the dangerous hunt. There’s the need for the teamwork of the Mist Lizards to go well. They said that, one of these days, someone might even end up dying and—” (Kiko)

“Kiko, I get it. I will hear the continuation at a later time. You have a drinking party, right? Have fun.” (Ema)

Ema said that she had some business to attend, and yet, her friend began to talk bullets, making her smile bitterly. She felt that there would be no end if this continued, so in order to cut off the conversation, she sends her off.

“Right. That’s right! Then, if there’s anything I can help with, tell me tomorrow, okay? See ya!” (Kiko)

“Yeah.” (Ema)

With her energetic friend leaving, silence falls.

Since the time Ema was invited to Asora, she has been close to Makoto, hears out his plans and gives many an objection to them. Not only that, the requests and opinions of the Lizards, Dwarfs, Arkes, and the other races, she would report them to Makoto and Tomoe.

Unknowingly, many had ended up relying and respecting her.

This popularity didn’t change even when Makoto had arrived at a hyuman base and his time in Asora decreased. Or rather, her popularity increased.

With her high communication skills and information arranging ability, she is

passing her days in Asora assaulted by information and paperwork. Thinking about the days when they were living their everyday in the harsh wastelands and she had resolved herself to become a sacrifice, it could be said that her livelihood had made a radical change.

“It is truly a miracle.” (Ema)

The days that didn’t go well no matter what, with her meeting with Makoto - with just that one happening-, everything began to move favorably as if a cog-wheel had been found.

Obtaining the protection of a dragon, they have moved to a place richer than anything they could dream of, and are passing fulfilling days coexisting with other races.

What more is there to wish for?

Ema thought from the depths of her heart, and she is sure she is not the only one that feels this way. That’s because she felt that everyone in Asora was living their lives to the fullest.

Makoto told Ema that he would be leaving the World’s Border. And as a foothold to that, he arrived at a hyuman base and has stayed there.

“Well then, let’s do it today as well.” (Ema)

Ema soughs her throat full with water, and then, takes out something from the drawer of the desk.

It is something that Misumi Makoto entrusted to her.

The line of characters written there were none other than the magic languages that Makoto taught Ema. An old language that the Highland Orcs learned by chance.

The lithograph had several arias carved into it. Being taught how to read them, they obtained powerful magic. It didn’t even reach ten spells, but it served as a weapon for the Highland Orcs in order to live in that wasteland.

There was the need of quite the amount of magic power. No matter how out of norms a hyuman is, there’s no way a hyuman would be able to use those spells. That’s why, to thank him for bodyguarding Ema, they only intended to

teach him the aria. But Makoto managed to do it with a single explanation and easily succeeded.

She will never forget the fire at that time.

A big crack appeared in the common sense of Ema.

He says that he lacks ability; grieves that he can't speak common language; but Ema doesn't believe that at all.

He can have a conversation with anyone. Just how big of a talent that is. The only ones he can't speak with are humans. Just how small of a wall that is. And in reality, he is currently able to somehow manage common language with written communication.

The bundle of papers before her eyes is the same.

There is a massive amount of arias written there in a language that's supposed to only be known by the Highland Orcs.

“The first time I was given this, I seriously questioned what was going on.”
(Ema)

He apparently tried to arrange the aria of some spells that she taught him, but he basically gave it to her and asked to confirm if they could even be activated.

When she chanted them, it certainly did show the effect that he had written at the side of the aria.

Before she could think about things like ‘awesome’ or ‘interesting’, her stomach trembled. A laugh came out from her naturally.

From what Ema knows, magic should be something that you have to chant a set aria in order to activate. There's no room for arrangement. That's the common sense of high grade magic language.

In the case of a few low rank ones that have arias that you can't expect much from, there's some that the meaning of the spell has been analyzed and, just as Makoto said, are possible to be arranged. But the ones Ema taught him were high cost, high effectiveness, and high power magic language. If you put a grade to it, it would definitely be at the tops. Tinkering with the aria should be close to impossible.

"Uhm, there's thirteen this time huh. He said 'I am sorry for slackening this time around', but this is plenty. Write it down, and put them in order; next, check the activation..." (Ema)

Attack, defense, support, healing; he is properly pronouncing them, and yet, for some reason, he can't use healing and wind element spells at all.

But in the composed arias, there's wind element and healing as well.

This was also out of norms. Creating arias for elements he can't even use is something that Ema can't even imagine. It is as if she was witnessing someone that doesn't know numbers, and yet, is able to solve difficult equations.

"We orcs being poorly skilled was one of our worries. I thought that having no ability that stood out was linked to our lack of determination. But now..." (Ema)

Ema can tell that things are beginning to change quite a lot.

The kinfolk of Tomoe -the Mist Lizards-have beautiful blue shining scales and specialized in group battles. Presently, the Highland Orcs are training together with them, and the ability of the warriors has increased quite a lot.

The kinfolks of Mio -the Arkes-have high knowledge in medicine manufacturing, and the orcs have managed to absorb a part of that knowledge.

Makoto, who has knowledge that would widen the eyes of many, still tries to learn new things daily and investigates accordingly. This sight serves as a driving force for everyone.

The Elder Dwarfs that Tomoe brought have excelling blacksmithing techniques, and since the time they began living there, the equipment, daily goods, tools -at any rate, a variety of things had increased in quality.

On top of that, the strong spells that were taught by Makoto and Ema is currently putting in order.

Rather than calling the Highland Orcs unskillful, it would be more accurate to describe them as a race that can do anything.

The more they are raised, the harder they are to deal with. And in reality, the other races evaluate the Highland Orcs highly.

Close combat, magic, farming, building, and all sorts of other skills. They are

able to do all of those efficiently, and they even know many languages. There's not a single person in existence who would define them as lacking in skill.

Because their life in the wasteland was long, their village was small, and there weren't many in numbers, which was somewhat of a problem for them.

Their circumstances are different from the fertile orcs. Maybe because their ability is high, their ability to procreate was not that high. Even so, compared to hyumans, they possess a slightly higher fertility rate. In other words, it can't be counted as a weakness.

The lack of people in Asora will definitely be resolved as Tomoe continues recruiting more people outside, so Ema didn't worry about that.

"Yeah. If it is this, it should be possible to announce this in three days time. With this, the efficiency at work should increase, and with these many arias, the mages will most likely lose sleep doing their best learning them. Ah, if that's the case, it would be better to investigate their aptitudes and make an order of learning...Hmm, I will have the other races try them out and, if there's any that might prove useful, learn them together with us. Raising together is efficient..... Now then, I will be giving the instructions at first, and so, regarding the appointed day..." (Ema)

Ema looks outside. It was already completely night.

"It will probably be an all-nighter." (Ema)

Words that suggested the work won't end. But for some reason, the face of the very person who said this looked as if she was having fun.

Two days passed.

Ema introduced over a hundred arias to everyone. Everyone was busily doing their own job, but just as Ema expected, many other races aside from the orcs showed interest.

Introducing the arias to the aspirants, Ema divided the mages according to their aptitude and their element of specialty, and worked on making it easier to learn.

It helped out that she herself was a great mage. And so, the spells that Makoto had passed to everyone through Ema were properly reverberating in everyone. As a result, the evaluation they had of Ema rose highly, and it also made her role in Asora heavier.

Seeing her active working, many have asked her 'isn't it tough?' 'are you pushing yourself?'.

"No, I am having fulfilling days. I think there will be even more people living here, so I want to do everything that can be done right now. By doing that, we can think further into the future, right?" (Ema)

Ema responds with a smile that showed no lies.

Just as she expected, there would be many races joining Asora after this, and people would be migrating there as well.

Forest Onis, Winged-kins, Gorgons...

Ema and the Highland Orcs introduced Asora to those new neighbors, guided them, and welcomed them.

The miraculous days continue on.

Extra Story XV - A certain day in a smithy

This is a story that happened a little after Makoto had arrived at Tsige.

In this world, most of the tableware used is wooden or metallic; this applied to the demi-humans as well. And in the workshops of the dwarfs, many armours and metallic instruments are made.

Right now, a new equipment was about to be born at a part of the workshop; an earth dome that has a chimney —a furnace.

It is something used to make earthenware. The dwarfs knew of its existence, but there were practically none who have actually used it.

The reason was simple, the ceramics and porcelain that are made with earth and stone as raw material were easy to produce but break just as easily.

In the world of the Goddess where metals are more plentiful compared to Earth, the tablewares being metallic or wooden was the standard.

“Pottery huh. I know about its existence, but it is easy to make and, compared to metal, I don’t think there’s much good points. If you are worried about the metallic taste sticking to your food, you can simply use woodenware after all.”

It was when Misumi Makoto was talking to the dwarfs about pottery and ceramics with the dwarfs.

It looked like pottery didn’t resonate much in this world that’s abundant with metal, wood, and magic.

Tomoe said ‘let’s make rice bowls’ and they challenged it (accurately speaking, were made to challenge) with many metals and woods, but it somewhat didn’t feel right. It looked pretty similar which made Makoto feel how amazing their ability as craftsmen was though.

And so, he was talking to the craftsmen about pottery and the elderly craftsmen knew about its existence.

He was surprised that the ceramics that are so common in his world were practically not used here, but once he thought about it, it is true that he hasn’t seen many around.

“The most important factor is that it breaks easily. If it is something that is used regularly, it is better for it to be durable and of easy use after all.”

“I see. Then there’s no need to force ourselves to make ceramics. I have not felt discomfort about it anyways and, since it is something that you are going through the trouble of making, going for the ones that don’t break as easily isn’t that bad.” (Makoto)

“Yes, in a near future, we will prepare nice things that feel no different from what Waka-sama used—”

“No, you can’t-ja! Ceramics, we are making that-ja!” (Tomoe)

“Tomoe, don’t be unreasonable. Also, I don’t have much knowledge in earthenware either. Even if you were to search in my memories, who knows if you will be able to find enough information to recreate i—” (Makoto)

But Makoto ended up remembering...

At a field trip he went, he had accompanied his bow master in her hobby of earthen things. If they were to try, it wouldn't be impossible.

"...Looks like there's a chance, Waka." (Tomoe)

"But there's no need to." (Makoto)

"Challenging new things is the way of the craftsmen, isn't it-ja na?" (Tomoe)

Without answering Makoto, Tomoe looks at the dwarfs.

It might even be called intimidating.

"You are already imposing on them with the matter of katanas. In the first place, you may think it is easy to make ceramics from earth, but it is actually an incredible form of art, you know? It is not something to just lightheartedly try out—" (Makoto)

"Let us do it! Please order us to!"

"Eh?" (Makoto)

Makoto was reprimanding Tomoe about not increasing the burden on the dwarfs, but was heavily surprised at their unexpected approval to Tomoe.

"I see, you will be doing it huh! Then wait for a bit, I will promptly gather the information." (Tomoe)

"Please do so, Tomoe-sama."

"Leave it to me!" (Tomoe)

"W-Why?" (Makoto)

Makoto watched over the conversation with the craftsman and Tomoe that was proceeding in high spirits.

He didn't notice that he had inadvertently poked at the craftsmen spirit of the dwarf.

Due to this, after a while...inside Asora, at a part of the residence area of the dwarfs, a furnace had been made.

"I see, the reason why the rice bowls are damaged at times is because they

are made of earth and are brittle huh. And so, using the ones that were molded from this clay, you burn them in fire and increase their hardness huh. Fumu, how interesting." (Tomoe)

"I tried doing it as instructed, even if we were to bake and harden this, small holes invisible to the naked eye will most likely be opened. If that happens, I don't think they will be fit to use as tableware."

One of the dwarfs brought a clay that was made to mold the shape of a bowl. He is the one in charge of this project within the craftsmen participating.

As expected of someone who has deep experience with fire, it seems he can notice a wide variety of things. First of all, he asked Makoto a point that bothered him.

"Yeah, that's right. That's why, after drying it once, you do something called glazing, and bake it again. It apparently closes the holes and gives it water resistance." (Makoto)

"Gulaising?"

"If I remember correctly, it is something that you dissolve clay with water and mix it with ash to make. You give another pass to the dried earthenware with glaze and bake it once again." (Makoto)

"...Clay, ash, and water huh. Is the objective to create a film for the heated up earthenware? It might depend on the temperature, but I assume that it will create a transparent film of glass-like properties."

"T-That's probably it. I heard that, depending on what you mix to the glaze, you can change the color and patterns of it, but I can't explain it in detail at all though. Sorry." (Makoto)

"No no! It is a technique of incredible interest. If done in the way you taught us, I think that we will get something of decent strength and it will most likely be usable. However...this might truly fall into the category of art."

After being explained this, the craftsman nodded several times as he dirtied his hands in mud.

It looks like he learned further than the information Makoto gave to him, and

was in admiration at how incredible someone specialized in their field is.

“Why do you think that-ja? I don’t really understand well the meaning of this ‘art’ that Waka speaks of-ja ga.” (Tomoe)

“Tomoe-sama, I think this manufacturing process is a perfected method with indefinite factors.”

“What weird things are you saying. That’s contradictory.” (Tomoe)

“No. With the materials and glaze, it is possible to make a plenty good ware from it. But depending on things like the time it is baked, the slight changes in weather at that time, the resulting ware will be affected by it. In other words, if you are to put your mind into it, you can make something of the same material properties, but if you were to tell me to make the same thing just because something good came out, I can’t say I would be able to do it. If it were a recreation using magic, I think it might be possible, but that might be a blasphemy towards the article that was replicated.”

“...Fumu, I see. It is unknown if you would be able to make two of the same thing huh. It is true that this would make you want to treasure the well done ones-ja.” (Tomoe)

Tomoe seemed as if she wasn’t completely convinced yet, but just as the dwarfs explained at first, ceramics and porcelain easily break. The factor that you might lose them easily places value to the wares as well.

“I like it. This technique that is as if you are imbuing fire into earth; it feels like there’s a lot of depth in it.”

“Don’t get too absorbed in it, okay? I think this is something that the other races can participate in as well, so make sure to get a wide space for it. Please let the aspirants have a lighthearted experience with it. With that, the workload won’t be as heavy for you guys.” (Makoto)

“Understood. I will discuss this with Ema-dono and do as you say.”

The craftsman leaves.

Makoto looks at Tomoe and she seemed to be fidgety.

‘As I thought’.

Seeing this, a wry smile appears in Makoto's face. Tomoe was simply supervising the work, but as the conversation progressed, the more she felt like trying it out.

"Tomoe, since we have the chance, how about trying your hand at pottery yourself?" (Makoto)

"Oh?! T-Then, I will take you up on that offer. No, it is not as if I find a childish thing like playing around with earth as fun, I just want to try it at least once, you see..." (Tomoe)

"Yeah yeah." (Makoto)

Having her back pushed by the words of her master, Tomoe follows after the craftsman with expectant eyes.

Her mouth may spill as many excuses as she wants, but her glad countenance wrote paragraphs of her emotions.

A new thing once again took root in Asora.

"In that case, the problems are many huh." (Tomoe)

"Right, Tomoe-sama. It looks like it can't be replicated. This is unexpected."

"Not even with spirit magic?" (Tomoe)

"I did bring it outside once to try it out, but it was impossible. There's no spirits in Asora after all. Actually, that might be a factor that is influencing this."

"Well, it shouldn't be a problem if we make the furnace bigger and increase the amount we make at once. Waka did say something to that extent, but well, for now we can still make them even without much experience, and once we get used to it to a certain extent, we can make plenty good tablewares. It might be nice to go the extra length and have everyone make their own tablewares. These are not the words of Waka, but there might be an artist within the races. And most importantly, it is fun!" (Tomoe)

Tomoe was speaking with joy.

In her hands, there's the teacup that the craftsman made. It was the first one

made.

Tomoe's work was late in finishing, so the second round ones were still inside the furnace.

Today was the day to take them out from the furnace. And Tomoe also went there with the intentions of hearing the problematic points after.

"But I was surprised when it was taken out from the furnace at first. It was made from the same process and only the shape was different, and yet, the impression it gives differs so much. I was expecting some slight unevenness between them, but it surpassed even that. Also..."

The eyes of the dwarf are directed at the teacup that Tomoe is holding.

"They have a particular feeling of touch to it that is different from that of metal or wood. But it feels nice." (Tomoe)

"Yeah, that was also outside expectations. I am truly glad we made this. It is thanks to Tomoe-sama."

"That's right. Be grateful. Will it be difficult to draw patterns and color to it?" (Tomoe)

"I asked Waka-sama, and there's apparently a way to draw and make patterns before and after the application of the glaze. Regarding the color...I think that the clay and the materials mixed into it as well as what's behind the glaze will be affecting it."

"And we can't use magic for that either?" (Tomoe)

"Yeah. We have no choice but to go with trial and error. Waka-sama doesn't seem to have much knowledge regarding this, so it can't be helped."

There were two points of interest in what the dwarf reported to Tomoe.

The first one is that magic practically cannot affect it. It apparently has something to do with the earth of Asora and the manufacturing way. It was not possible to make additions to it with magic.

But well, in the end, it is still earthenware. It may have strong resistance to

outside change, but when they tried to attack it from the outside, it easily broke.

It simply meant that it was difficult to affect the properties of it, so it could be said that it had resistance to magic in a way that didn't have much use.

The other one is also the reason why Tomoe looks like she is having so much fun.

There were already addicts among them.

The fun of kneading the earth, the sense of expectation from taking out the ware after baking it, the point that allows many people to be involved in the production process; this had touched the craftsman heart of the dwarfs and made them absorbed in it.

The craftsman looked as if he were calmly giving his report, but in reality, he was also one of the people that was charmed by the ceramics. To the point that the dwarf reported to Tomoe that there were a number of people absorbed in it already.

"I think that we can sell it as a company good once we are able to easily put color to it. So this is a hidden card that doesn't easily open up to anyone huh. What a tough one." (Tomoe)

Lifting the teacup in front of her face, Tomoe looks at it with interest.

"What must be thought of first is whether using earth from outside turns out well. After that, it depends on our research..."

"I am counting on you guys. By the way, is it about time for it to be finished?" (Tomoe)

"Yeah, it won't be long. Ah, looks like it is coming."

"I am looking forward to it-ja na. I wonder how my handmade one turned out." (Tomoe)

The eyes of Tomoe were directed at what the young craftsman was holding in his hands, something that was covered in cloth.

But the hands were shaking —no, the young craftsman himself was shaking.

Maybe he steeled himself, he takes off the cloth.

“Wa?!”

Everyone gulps their breath. There was tension running through the whole room.

At the trembling tray, there’s a single rice bowl. But it had a big crack on it. Probably a fail at baking.

“I-It is cracked!!”

“I-It seems like someone made a mistake somewhere! Tomoe-sama, I am truly sorry!!”

No, there’s no way that was the case.

Since the moment it came out from the furnace, it was already like this. The craftsmen could tell this immediately with their trained eyes.

“No, from what I see...”

“Shut up! This might spell the end of ceramics—”

“Let me ask. Was this because it fell and broke, or it was broken the moment it was brought out of the furnace? Which one is it-ja? Answer me honestly.”
(Tomoe)

Tomoe’s face was saying she wouldn’t forgive a lie. It was clear in the eyes of anyone.

“...Since...the moment it was taken out from the furnace it was already...”

“...I see.” (Tomoe)

The representative of the craftsmen looks at the sky.

Tomoe failed.

If this sours her mood, it probably won’t be possible to continue making ceramics.

For these people, who were already caught in the charm of it, they were thinking about having a young craftsman cry about it and lie. But that lie lost to

the pressure of Tomoe and the craftsman answered honestly.

It is over, is what he thought.

Silence ruled over the room.

“Fuh~, it was my first time after all. Can’t be helped! No, this makes it feel even more fun to play around with the earth!” (Tomoe)

Tomoe, who was hanging her head down for a moment, raised her head. Cheerful words came out from her mouth.

“Don’t mind it too much. I will be coming here every now and then to try my hand again, so do your best in your research.” (Tomoe)

Saying this, Tomoe took the failed bowl and left.

Being freed from the tension, they let out a big sigh.

“Okay, you guys! Immediately arrange the results! Also, tell the earth collecting group to gather from as much a variety of locations as possible. That goes for the ones in Asora and those outside.”

“Yes!”

Instructions fly from the craftsman that took the lead and headed to the furnace.

And in this way, the art of ceramics began in Asora.

“Oya, is that made from iron? It doesn’t look like wood.”

From the number of things that were lined up inside the shelf of the counter, there was a single plate that drew the attention of the customer. A question was directed at the dwarf assistant there.

“No, it is something made from earth. This was just a slight attempt at killing time, but it ended up like that.”

“From earth?! You speaking in that way...does that mean you were the one who made it?! That’s quite impressive. You can do a lot of other things aside from armours huh. But is it possible to use earthenware? It looks as if it might have leaks and is easy to break.”

“It won’t leak. There’s a little trick to that. In terms of weight and being easy to break, it is still the case though. But most importantly, there’s a nice taste in utilizing it. Want to try touching it?”

“Please! Uwa, I wonder why is it, it feels like I might get used to it. Also, there’s a gloss that I wouldn’t think possible of earth. The color is also nice. Even though it is white, there’s a slight blue tint to it and I feel as if I am being drawn into it.”

The dwarf stroked his beard happily at the evaluation of the customer. His expression was the very definition of a stubborn old man though, but it also looked as if he were trying to hide his embarrassment and that was somewhat cute.

“I am still in training though. Different from metal, I can’t replicate the same thing of this in mass, which is slightly saddening.”

“Us reproducing it is impossible, but for you craftsman-san, it shouldn’t be something of worry, right? I have heard that you have the permission to do so with conditions.”

“Well, I do have that permission as well, but that’s not it. The wares that are made with that manufacturing process have a strange resistance to alteration and replication magic. I simply can’t use them on it.”

“I see... There’s mysterious things in this world.”

“Can’t have said it better.”

This is in the remote town of Tsige. Inside the big company that no one in this town doesn’t know, there’s a small company renting a room there.

The conversation of the customer and the dwarf stopped.

The customer stopped speaking and was changing the angles, getting close, and away of it as he seriously inspected the plate.

The assistant didn’t stop him and returns to wiping the weapon he was minding before being spoken to.

The sound of cloth wiping the weapon and the man gasping continued.

“...Hey, I have a question.”

“Hm?”

The man once again speaks to the dwarf. Those eyes were not of being deeply moved, they held a strong light of resolve.

“This plate, can I have it?”

“That? Hm, I didn’t put it there with the intention of selling it though.”

The dwarf makes a troubled expression. It is something he brought to decorate the store, and in reality, he has been having fun looking at it every now and then.

“Please! I am fine with you deciding the price! I want to try having my cooking put on this place no matter what!”

“...You were a cook?”

“Y-Yeah! I came here to relax.”

“From the perspective of a cooking specialist, does this plate look good?”

“Of course!”

“Then I will give it to you. The price will be to bring me the food you made on this plate and let me eat it. How about that?”

The assistant made an expression as if thinking and then easily agreed.

“R-Really?! I will happily do my VERY BEST at making it! There’s a food establishment of an acquaintance of mine I am using as lodging. Can you please go there?!”

This cook that took the plate with care had the intention of obtaining this no matter how many months of pay it costed him.

He is a man that seemed to be decently aged, but that expression was like that of a little child that had his wish fulfilled. This may be a trait of this man that won’t change even in age though.

Seeing this, the dwarf could understand those sentiments of his as if it were his own.

“Yeah, when you make something that you feel is good, call me. I will go.”

"Thanks! This is my wallet. I am leaving everything. Once my cooking satisfies you, you can return it!"

The man left running while hugging the plate in both arms.

The existence of ceramics will begin to spread at this day.

Later, in this Aion, the ceramics will resonate within the hyumans steadily.

Makoto didn't plan on keeping it a secret anyways, and the dwarfs happily taught the basic method to the ones that wanted to learn.

The man, who was given the plate from the dwarf at first, in time, changed the place he lived in Tsige and opened a restaurant himself.

The ceramics were a big trigger to the popularity of his store.

The splendid taste and the peculiar plates and bowls used created a multiplying effect that made word spread.

The pottery that began with the forcefulness of Tomoe, the creations of it had fallen into the eyes of a few rich people, and in time, had obtained worth that was no different from pieces of art.

The high grade wares that came from Tsige at times, they took the name of the person that was deeply involved in the birth of ceramics and were named 'Tomoe'. This is something that no one will know until a later future.

Extra Story XVI - A certain day in Tsige

What happened at summer ①

Is it a customer?

Sorry, I am not in the mood to draw today, so I am done.

Eh?

A butcher?

If it is that, there should be a lot of those in the market, but I think they are already closed.

That's not it?

The bar?

If it is that, you should get to one after turning that street there. You will be walking for a bit, but it should be easy to find.

Meeting someone there or something?

You ask why?

That place, there's a lot of adventurers and people looking to have jobs done, but that's a place that people living here go to.

You old men are new in this town, right?

I saw you people entering the Adventurer Guild just a few moments ago, but I have been drawing the faces of people for quite a long time, so I can somewhat tell.

My sister is an adventurer as well after all.

Guiding, you say?

Hm, there's no need to, you know. It is truly easy to tell where the butcher is after all. Also, I am waiting for my sister here, so if I leave this place, I might worry her. That's why, I am sorry.

Even if you beg me, it is just troubling...

'It is different from when you came before and don't have the confidence'? True, even I as a resident get flustered every now and then, but...

Hah...

Understood.

Then, I will accompany you till we see the store, okay?

Please wait for a bit.

Sorry, Rin-san. I will be leaving for a bit, so can you look after the tools while I am gone? I will return quickly.

Thanks.

Sorry for the wait. Let's go.

When was the last time you came?

You came here half a year ago huh. Then it is no surprise you would get lost.

It has been incredibly lively lately with buildings being made, moved, and even the gate has been moved twice in half a year.

Even though it took 10 years to do that before. It is amazing.

The butcher and the store's locations have changed.

The prices haven't changed since half a year ago, but it seems to be prospering quite a lot.

My sister always spends her money there.

I try to stop her, but she quickly forgets.

But you old men adventurers should do jobs that fit your strength and do it safely, okay?

Don't misunderstand the increase in security and liveliness, there's people that die suddenly in the wasteland because of it after all.

Development is good, but the restrictions have gotten looser and there's people that open the gate just with money.

That's why, take care, okay?

No way.

I am not intelligent.

I only heard that from my sister.

Eh?

Why do you old men know that my sister is Toa?

Eh, the store is not over there.

Get your hands off me!

What are you doing?!

No!

Someon—Hngh!!

“Hurry!!”

“I know! Hey, wouldn’t it be easier to just cut her to pieces?”

“We have to get to the hideout first. It might be more convenient to have her alive. We are not the ones to decide that.”

The men run in the dark alleys.

One of the men was shouldering a jute sack. Inside of it, there’s the young girl they abducted.

Also, they acted on the knowledge that she knows of someone. There’s no doubt it was a planned crime.

The young girl that was drawing portraits close to the Adventurer Guild, Rinon.

She is the little sister of one of the adventurer party members that represent Tsigi.

For the people that know this, harming her is unthinkable.

Who knows what kind of grudge they hold towards the sister of Rinon, Toa. Sadly for them, the details of this won’t come to light and they will be dealt

with as petty intruders.

“?!! What, a brat?!”

“You people, what are you planning on doing with Rinon?”

A girl holding a sword not matching her size with a young voice that matched her outer appearance asked this.

“Tch! An acquaintance of yours huh! Oi, erase her!”

“Kill her before it causes a ruckus!!”

It was a group of three men.

They were running through the alley in line, but they were blocked by a blue haired girl.

They didn't answer the question of the girl, and judging from the conversation, the man at the front judged that she is an acquaintance of Rinon, and confirms with the man at the rear that's behind the one that's shouldering the jute sack with Rinon inside.

Receiving the permission to kill.

The man gave his approval in an instant.

“If you hadn't met us, you wouldn't have had to die!!”

There was the shine of a blade in the hands of the man.

Without even showing a single bit of hesitation, the man unleashes an attack that contained killing intent at the girl that was still standing there.

“Doesn't answer, a blade, killing intent... Guilty.”

Who knows if that mutter had reached the ears of the man.

The second man stopped his feet —cause the comrade at his front had been cut in half vertically.

The figure of the girl was gone.

And just like that, it connected to the second surprise.

“Rinon is a friend.”

The man that is shouldering Rinon turns his head...at the place where the voice came from.

There, he saw the figure of his leader skewered by spear-shaped things.

When he nervously looked down, he saw the blue haired girl there.

No, the man thought that this is something taking the form of a little girl.

“She promised to have dinner with me today.”

The man noticed the abnormality in his body.

He couldn’t feel the lower half of his body.

When he looked, he could see that the strangely-shaped sword of hers had pierced his stomach, and yet, he couldn’t feel pain.

It was frozen —the place where it was pierced and everything below it. And this had reached his chest, shoulders, as it continued to advance.

It finally reached the neck, and a *creak creak* noise he is not used to hearing began to resound.

Ah right, there was no blood either.

The man that was pierced remembered the man that was killed first, the one he can’t even afford to turn his head to see anymore.

Those were the last thoughts and senses of this man.

The little girl takes out the katana and sheathes it back to its scabbard. While at it, she swings her right hand once and the three kidnappers turned into dust of ice and disappeared.

She catches the jute sack with her left hand.

Carrying it with both hands, she runs just like that and returns Rinon to her work spot.

The jute sack was opened, and Rinon who was gagged and had both hands and legs bound came out.

After being released, Rinon begins to cry.

But when she notices that the one who saved her was the blue haired girl, she

soon wipes those tears away.

“T-Thank you for saving me, Komoe.” (Rinon)

Rinon gives her thanks to Komoe, the friend she met not that long ago.

She is an apprentice at the Kuzunoha Company and normally doesn't come out to the public, but since meeting her with the introduction of Makoto, she has become the friend of Rinon.

Now that Komoe is able to make gates to Asora, in her free days, she would come to Tsige every now and then.

‘I will be going out to play’.

There are times when Makoto doesn't know that Komoe's destination is Tsige.

Those are quite the convenient words.

Within the customers and adventurers, they see her pretty often and know her as a relative of Tomoe.

“Rinon, more importantly, today is meal day.” (Komoe)

“I-I know! When the others come, okay? Hey Komoe, could it be that you saved me on your own? Where are the criminals?” (Rinon)

Even though Rinon embarrassingly managed to give out her thanks, Komoe lightly pushed that away and confused her.

“That level of ruffians, I alone am enough-de gozaru.” (Komoe)

“...Sorry, I don't understand what you are saying. Is that Tomoe-oneechan language?” (Rinon)

“That's right, Edo language. Tomoe-sama taught me. You can translate it as ‘I alone am enough against those thugs’.” (Komoe)

Looks like Tomoe's weird way of speaking had been established within those two.

“I have also been taught Golgo language. ‘Don't stand behind me’.” (Komoe)
<Golgo 13 reference.>

Komoe_(LN)

Komoe doesn't seem to mind at all what she did a few moments ago and has a carefree talk with a girl that looks the same age as her.

"...Komoe, I don't understand well, but I feel like you can ignore those kind of teachings..." (Rinon)

"Really?" (Komoe)

"Yeah. When I meet Onii-chan again, I will talk to him about it." (Rinon)

"Onii-chan huh. Would it be better for me to call Waka-sama as Onii-chan?" (Komoe)

Komoe seems to be falling into thought.

Rinon felt like that gesture was cute and thought of a small prank.

“How about calling him Papa or Father?” (Rinon)

“Tomoe-sama told me once before to call him Daddy, but Mio-sama got incredibly scary.” (Komoe)

“...I-I see.” (Rinon)

“Yeah. My bananas got salt and powdered herbs sprinkled on them. I don’t want that anymore.” (Komoe)

“Banana huh. It appears at the Kuzunoha’s store every now and then, but I don’t see it often. They taste good.” (Rinon)

“When I get them next time, I will share with you. Look forward to it, Rinon.” (Komoe)

While they were doing harmless talk like that, someone calls Rinon from faraway.

This was a voice Rinon was familiar with and wouldn’t ever mistake.

“It is Oneechan.” (Rinon)

“Right. I will tell Toa-ane about what happened just now.” (Komoe)

“Won’t it worry her?” (Rinon)

“Can’t allow danger to remain.” (Komoe)

Komoe says it firmly as if to say she is not backing off.

“Komoe is strong and mature, so it is nice. Maybe I should learn to fight as well.” (Rinon)

“...? Why? Rinon is good at drawing. I like it. I think it is more impressive than fighting.” (Komoe)

Komoe was called mature.

Rinon is able to do something like drawing -which she can’t-and is gaining money, so Komoe was unable to understand why she was jealous of her and tilts her head.

Komoe is a resident of Asora and her standing is also special.

She doesn't have money.

It is still too soon for her allowance, so she is basically provided what she has.

That's why there are times she is troubled when she comes to Tsige to play.

In the eyes of Komoe, Rinon who has money in her pockets is amazing.

Makoto has been a lot in Asora lately since it is summer break, so he has been teaching Komoe, but this town doesn't have that concept of thinking. Using children as important manual labour is completely normal, and it is not strange for children like Rinon to work on their own accord.

Unless you are born in a pretty well-established household, this is the usual, and it could be said that Komoe is a rare case.

But well, she is doing special work in Asora in her own way, so it is not as if she is playing around all the time though.

"Ahaha, thanks. This is a pretty rowdy place after all. I have to think by myself for a bit too." (Rinon)

"If you want to train in the camp, I can ask Waka-sama. I can be your trainer." (Komoe)

"Uh, yeah. I will think about it a bit. There's the option of having Oneechan teach me as well." (Rinon)

"Got it." (Komoe)

"Ah, right! As thanks for before, let me draw a portrait of you, Komoe!" (Rinon)

"Really?! T-Then, one where I am at the side of Waka-sama!" (Komoe)

The proposal of Rinon made Komoe show a smile fitting of her age.

"...I don't know about having a masked person at your side." (Rinon)

"Muh~, then without the mask!" (Komoe)

"I haven't seen the face of Onii-chan before. When I see his face, I will draw that one, so today make it a different one." (Rinon)

"Eh~. Then...uhm...a drawing with Rinon and I!" (Komoe)

“M-Me?!” (Rinon)

Rinon was clearly flustered about the second request of Komoe.

She actually hasn't drawn herself much.

“Counting on you!!” (Komoe)

The confused Rinon and the wide smile of Komoe.

The two girls wait for Toa to arrive as they clean up the place, and they welcomed with joy the late night of summer that finally arrived.

Extra Story XVII - A certain day at Tsige

What happened at summer ②

Jin Roan and the other students taking the classes of the temporary teacher, Raidou, were using this summer vacation to acquire a battle style that fits to their own and polishing themselves.

They have already drawn a slight rough picture of their ideal and are trying to make that reality.

The current state varies between each of them. But there are two who are acting separately from their other classmates -the two daughters of Tsige's wealthy merchant, Rembrandt; Sif and Yuno.

This summer vacation, they resolved themselves to do the supplementary lessons they somehow managed to have Raidou accept to do, and their own personal training, so the two sisters didn't plan on returning to Tsige.

Unfortunately, their father Rembrandt is acquainted to Raidou as a merchant, moreover, Raidou seems to be fond of Rembrandt.

It was easy to refuse the request of their father to return to Tsige, but when it came to their benefactor Raidou who had cured their cursed disease, it was hard to reject it —no, they couldn't reject it.

With this unexpected development, Sif and Yuno ended up passing the second half of their summer vacation at their home.

The two sisters felt sluggish at the current situation, but there was a big possibility that changing their environment rather than staying all their summer in Rotsgard would be beneficial for them. That's why it wasn't settled yet that what their doting father did was a minus for them.

Just in case, Raidou told them softly to the sisters when they were leaving to Tsige to not blame their father too much and had told them the aforementioned details while choosing his words properly.

Sadly to say, the 'Understood' that came from them as a response and their expression showed clear signs of not being in favor of this.

Raidou, who had sent the two girls off out of a sense of duty towards Rembrandt, thought: 'oh well, things should work out someway or another', as he hid his bitter smile and saw off Sif and Yuno.

"This is Tsige, right?"

"Yeah. This is the last stop, so...it probably is."

After a few days, the Rembrandt sisters crossed the gates of their hometown, and the both of them had their eyes wide open.

There should be someone meeting them there, but before they could search for that person, they had frozen.

The Golden Highway is one of the commercial routes and a gate there connects to the town of Tsige.

Tsige is a special place located at the frontier that is the wasteland.

There's not a single teleport formation in the town. You can't enter or leave the town or head to the wasteland without traversing through the gates.

That's why, the place the sisters are currently in, if an example were to be given, it would be like being in front of the station.

It is one of the places where it is the easiest to see the development of the town.

Due to the circulation of goods doing well these days, this is a place where the hustle and bustle doesn't stop.

“From what I can see from here, only the Rezo Street looks familiar...” (Sif)

“There’s a hell lot more people. When we were leaving to the Academy, there were quite a bit of people as well, but...this is incredible.” (Yuno)

The most conspicuous street that extends from the Golden Highway to the town’s center, the Rezo Street, hadn’t changed in appearance.

But most of the buildings that were lined up at its sides were not familiar to them, moreover, the people and carriages filling the street was heavily different from the town that the two remember.

They felt as if the liveliness was a lot higher than that of the Academy Town.

After being away from their hometown for a while, they were once again reminded that the entering to the wasteland was prospering and was in a state where the business was in continuous rise in Tsige, which overwhelmed the two.

“Sif-ojosama, Yuno-ojosama!”

“We are back.” (Sif)

“Morris!” (Yuno)

“Welcome back. Those faces, as expected, it surprised you, right?” (Morris)

“Yeah, it is incredible. It hasn’t been long, and yet, it has become so amazing...” (Sif)

“It was a shocker! Don’t tell me our house has changed as well?!” (Yuno)

“The construction work around this place had finished just recently, so even I am not used to the level of liveliness here yet. Yuno-ojosama, the residence has not changed at all since the time you left to the Academy.” (Morris)

A low but clear voice was directed at Sif and Yuno. It was the butler serving long in the Rembrandt household, Morris.

Since the two ladies had returned, he went to pick them up.

Even though he is already old, he had a beautiful upright posture.

The unchanging figure of Morris had relieved the two.

In reality, Rembrandt planned on going to pick them up himself, but because of a sudden business discussion, he had no choice but to give up on it.

He tried to give up on the business discussion instead, but his wife and butler hurriedly stopped him and the job of picking the two up was moved to Morris.

“I see. There seems to be a lot of places worth checking out. Even though this is the city I was born and raised in...it feels kind of strange. Also...I was sure father would be the one coming, but Morris was the one, that’s also strange.”
(Sif)

“Ah! Right, father! Doing something underhanded like using Raidou-sensei! I was thinking about complaining to him!!” (Yuno)

“A sudden business discussion came in, so I have come here in his stead. If you are going to be taking an outing, I will prepare the necessary, so first, please head to the carriage. Let’s return first before doing anything.” (Morris)

“Mother and Morris must have it tough. At times, I wonder how father was able to become a merchant that could make such a big company.” (Sif)

“...Since it is father we are talking about, I thought he would cancel the business discussion, but it looks like he still has a bit of a head on his shoulders.”
(Yuno)

A sudden business discussion.

With those few words, Sif understood the situation somewhat, but Yuno made a statement that gave out remaining trust towards her father.

Their mother and Morris let out a dry laugh at this and both of them invite the two to the carriage that has a mark on it.

Even though it is terribly congested, the carriage was moving smoothly as the people and things moved to the sides like sea splitting.

It was a scene that made clear how much power the Rembrandt Company had in Tsige.

“And so, I tried coming to the Adventurer Guild, but...” (Yuno)

Yuno Rembrandt rubs her eyes.

There's the Adventurer Guild right in front of her eyes.

There's none in Rotsgard, but it is a familiar location for adventurers looking to do requests.

The paths increased and new buildings were constructed, which confused her a great deal, but she somehow managed to make it all the way there.

It should be something easy to do, but she felt strangely accomplished as if she had achieved something difficult. That's how it is, but...

"Why are there two guilds?" (Yuno)

That's right. In front of Yuno, there's two buildings with similar structure lined up next to each other. Both of them with the sign of Adventurer Guild.

This is a mystery.

If she had begun to search for differences, she might have noticed, but Yuno simply rubbed her eyes and had a glance at it, so without much hesitation, she entered the guild to her left.

'When in doubt, go to the left', is one of her policies.

"Uh." (Yuno)

An incredible heat covers Yuno.

Because of all the people, she couldn't see the reception desk.

Yuno has come here many times before, but it still flustered her.

"You are in the way, move."

"Don't just stand still in the entrance!"

"Ah, sorry." (Yuno)

Being shouted at, Yuno reflexively apologized and moves to the side.

If it were her past-self before she was ill, she would have used her Rembrandt name to torment them.

There's the possibility that they might look down on her because of this, but this is an action that proves she has grown as a person.

Morris, who was silently watching over Yuno from the shadows without being noticed by her, had a teary eye when he saw this.

“...I see. This guild is solely for the wasteland huh. I can’t go entering the wasteland. Looks like I picked the wrong one.” (Yuno)

After surveying the surroundings, Yuno understood the situation.

In the past, the requests regarding the wasteland and those that were not were separated by boards. Now, maybe because the amount of requests increased, it has been separated in buildings.

She silently leaves and enters the other guild.

There were a good amount of people, but it didn’t give out a chaotic atmosphere.

Yuno felt a sense of relief at the familiar atmosphere of the guild and stops her gaze at her objective.

She approaches the reception desk and places her elbow on the counter.

“Welcome! What can I help you wi—wait, Yuno! What! When did you return?! It is been so long!”

“Yeah yeah. It is admirable that you are seriously doing your work.” (Yuno)

“Talking to me on a pedestal huh, you~. It is my job after all, I will obviously do it seriously. It is not as busy as the other one, but it is still a tough job in this town.”

“It is been a while since I have been here and the guild increased to two after all. It gave me a shocker. And the townscape has changed completely as if it were a completely different one.” (Yuno)

“Calling it a completely different one is an exaggeration~. Ah, but the adventurers that have returned after several months of being away, there are times when they would even ask people to guide them.”

The one Yuno saw was an old childhood friend of hers.

While being happy about reuniting with her old friend, they began to have a casual talk.

There's not many adventurers coming to the reception desk, so it is a situation that can be allowed, but the two of them didn't mind it.

"It has changed quite a bunch, so I can understand that. A-chan, when are you done with your work today? You got this job through a connection, so can't you slip out?" (Yuno)

"Let's see, around one more hour. Wait, did you come all the way here to meet me? The little Rembrandt princess has? Also, don't call it connection. I am working seriously, you know."

"It was a coincidence. I came here to check out requests that I might be able to do and saw you here, so I spoke to you. It is not necessary to take a request today, so let's just say I am prioritizing my friend." (Yuno)

Yuno easily shakes her head to the sides.

"Saying that it was just a coincidence so readily... Then, go search for requests while waiting. I will guide you to recently popular places. It will be your treat."

"Eh?! I just came back, and yet, I will be the one treating?!" (Yuno)

"It is the penalty for your previous statement that showed a lack of understanding towards a lady's heart."

Yuno was muttering out complains, but, maybe she decided on doing her original objective, she began to fish for requests. She leaves the reception desk and heads to the request board.

They were friends in school, but they were also rivals. In other words, a friend that you have to be on guard with. But for Yuno, she is also a friend she can truly relax herself with. If she had to compare them to the school friends she has, she would be classified as one of her lax friends.

Maybe that's why Yuno, who has a good-upbringing, was able to become friends with her slightly easily without getting haughty.

"Hmm, is there a request for an individual that's recommended to be around level 70 or party ones for around level 50." (Yuno)

Yuno flips around the catalogue of requests she borrowed while looking at the request board as well.

She has returned to her hometown, but she wasn't planning on slacking.

She was narrowing down the requests, prioritizing experience over the reward.

Yuno Rembrandt still hasn't found her own fighting style. She felt that something was missing.

That's why she is thinking of grasping that something no matter what.

"It makes me impatient whenever I see Jin-senpai already pushing through the path of the dual-sword style. The spear-wielding of Shiki-san is mainly concentrated on spells, and the bow style of Raidou-sensei is just abnormal."

(Yuno)

Receiving the teachings of Raidou, Yuno has advanced quite a bit in the path of magic, but it is not something she can use as her main style in battle.

When it is about battle, it is better to use your weapon of choice.

She has registered as an adventurer in the guild and has a class job of her own. Of course, she has also acquired a good amount of special skills, so if she were to put them in action, she would be able to fight decently.

But Raidou has told them not to rely too much on skills, especially the ones that have easy arias and have to be intonated to cast.

A style centered in skills is the usual with adventurers who have the warrior job, and many students in the Academy fight in this way. That's why Yuno felt incredibly strange at that instruction, but she understands the reason for it at present.

The skills -especially the ones that you have to intonate to cast-move your body forcibly. For example; the High Slash that is known widely mostly around the lightweight warriors. It is a skill you can use when your feet are on the ground, and it makes you jump high up to cut down your target. You can't move freely until you have finished the attack. In cases like when you miss, a fatal opening would be created.

Of course, you will be obtaining jumping strength that surpasses your usual ability, and it has its own advantages so, depending on how you use it, it could

be useful.

Yuno had interpreted the words of Raidou as 'learn to move your own body in battle properly first in order to bring out the best of your skills'.

Even so, when the time comes when she has to use those skills, it proves quite the hurdle.

Yuno has been hiding under the convenience of the skills for a long time, but now, she has begun to worry about her own fighting style and is currently passing her days with headaches.

By the way, Raidou can't use a single active skill.

Even if he has a few choices with the low level ones, but since he is level 1, it is understandable that he has not obtained a single one.

All the jobs that Root has set-up in his system, you can't be any of those if you are level 1.

'I can't teach what I don't know', was actually Raidou's reason. The reality of things was actually pretty pathetic.

But misunderstandings sometimes create incredible miracles.

Jin couldn't use skills in the tournament, so he felt as if they were telling him to train with the premise that he can't use them to begin with, and he has been working hard in this way.

The active skills are one of the benefits of the Adventurer Guild.

There were no few places where the use of them were prohibited, like for example; in events where you compete with martial arts.

Of course, Raidou doesn't know about that.

In the end, Yuno was unable to find a good request and left the guild together with her friend at the stipulated time.

Yuno was passing a fun night with her friend A-chan -actual name, Ates.

However, this night surpassed the danger levels she expected by a lot, but sadly, she wouldn't know this until she was already caught up in the trouble.

“W-What should we do?” (Ates)

Yuno was thinking the same thing as what Ates voiced out at her side.

Most problems could be wrapped up by bringing out the name Rembrandt, but there are exceptions -in the cases when they are hostile towards the Rembrandt Company, or when they are not sane.

Tonight was the latter.

Intoxicated by alcohol.

Yuno is strong, but that's in student standards.

She remembered him because he shouted at her when she had entered the wrong guild, but if asked whether she can fight him off, the answer would be no.

The option of peacefully settling this with a talk was already out the moment he got involved with them randomly. He was quite drunk.

But even if he is drunk, he is an adventurer that completes wasteland requests. Yuno is around the standard in ability. He was not an opponent she could go against.

The surroundings felt as if they were uninterested or taking the stand of observers.

(The best choice would be to make as much of a ruckus as possible so someone that knows me helps us out. Looks like silently leaving the house has come to bite me.) (Yuno)

Even with that, Yuno was calmly thinking about a solution, but...

“Kya! Kugh!” (Yuno)

In an instant, at the moment when she was thinking whether there's an acquaintance around and her gaze had left the two troublemakers that came to complain to them, Yuno was lifted up from her neck with one arm by the man.

She thought that was quite the sharp move for someone drunk.

When she confirmed the state of her friend, it looked like the other man was on top of her, using both arms to keep her pinned on the ground.

She wanted to do something about it, but she was currently caught from the throat and lifted up, so she was in a state where she can't even breathe properly.

(First of all, what to do. Ah geez. This is my hometown, but what bad security this town has...) (Yuno)

It was painful, but Yuno still wasn't falling into panic.

If the name of Rembrandt doesn't work, there's no way to deal with the adventurers that head to the wasteland. But in the other hand, this also meant that, normally, there's no adventurer in this town that Yuno can't deal with.

And in reality, the fate of the adventurers currently cornering Yuno and her friend has already been sealed.

No matter how they act from now on, they have stirred the rage of the Rembrandt Company's representative, and will most likely disappear from this town by tomorrow.

But that doesn't solve the problem now.

What will save her right now would be...

"Now then, let's leave it at that."

A soft voice echoed within the onlookers of the bar.

Even though this is the time when you would be soaking your entrails with alcohol in order to spit out the tiredness of the day, there was a single man wearing a butler suit.

He stepped into the scene where Yuno, Ates, and the two men were in, and then, as if nothing, he lightly hits the right arm of the man holding the neck of Yuno around his elbow.

"Ah? You...do you know who I am—-Uoah?!"

Even though he didn't hit that hard, the big man released Yuno and drew in his arm.

Gasps of surprise were let out.

But the butler didn't mind it. He carries Yuno on his arms and directs his gaze

at the other victim of this.

‘Excuse my intrusion’, is what he says as he fixes his glasses.

“Ates-sama, banzai.” (Morris)

“Eh?” (Ates)

“Lift both arms up.” (Morris)

“Ah, okay.” (Ates)

“Eh, what are you doing, girl?”

Being suddenly told a strange thing from the elderly man, Ates was dumbfounded while she raised her arms just as he instructed.

When she did this, the man that was on top of her was pushed heavily up.

Everyone was concentrating on the elder man, making this action possible.

The butler in question laughs.

“Well then, now rise your knees with full strength.” (Morris)

“Knees? Like...this?!” (Ates)

“Gagh!!”

“Ah.” (Ates)

“Perfect. Now, come over here.” (Morris)

Lifting up her knees with all her strength as she was told, she finally understood the result of it.-her knees had hit right at his nether region. And it was without any sort of restrain, she simply did it as she was told.

When she felt that the man had loosen his strength, Ates hurriedly takes refuge towards the man that gave her advice.

The pitiful man was letting out unintelligible words, that can only be interpreted as cries of pain, and his mouth was foaming with his eyes showing white.

“M-Morris-san! I was so scared~!!” (Ates)

“It is safe already, ladies. Ates-sama, Yuno-ojosama, please.” (Morris)

“Ah, yes.” (Ates)

“Ugh *cough cough**...Thanks, Morris.” (Yuno)

“Yuno-ojosama, I got shivers when I couldn’t see you anywhere. I will deal with this immediately, so let’s return home..... Milady is waiting.” (Morris)

The word Milady that Morris added at the end made Yuno groan.

She must have understood that what awaits her will be a scolding.

Morris takes off his coat and fixes his collar as he approaches the man that had taken Yuno by the neck.

“You bastard! I am an adventurer that gets a living from the wasteland, you know?! I can go all the way to the Ando Base, a big deal!! Don’t you get that?!”

“Ando, the second base, isn’t it. If it were half a year ago, I wouldn’t have minded giving you a few claps for that, but in this present time, I would say that’s not really a big deal. Not the level of someone that would warrant not fearing the Rembrandt.” (Morris)

“Ha! Don’t think that a mere merchant can act all big forever! You see, my level is one hundred thirt—Buagh!”

Morris’ thin right leg digs into the stomach of the big man.

“I am ashamed my level is not great. It is only around 300.” (Morris)

Saying this, the elderly butler places strength in his remaining left leg. Yuno associated this action with a spring contracting.

The next instant, Morris’ left leg separated from the ground, and with refined movements, the butler turns over in the air. The moment he released that pent up strength, his left leg sprung forth and crushed the lower jaw of the man.

As if the right leg that was still in the man’s stomach was chasing after the left one, it separated and Morris turned around in the air as he lands.

He calmly cleans the dust from his sleeve.

Those were acrobatic movements. Movements you wouldn’t think possible from an elderly man.

“Good grief. When the rude younglings increase, the amount of times my old

body needs to act increases and it is troubling.” (Morris)

As if singing along to the words of Morris, the sound of cheers and glass clanking each other echoed through the bar.

Tonight, the bar was the most heated up.

Ates also shouted ‘kya~!’ as she held Yuno and hopped up and down.

Within this, Yuno was looking at Morris with a dumbfounded expression.

“Now then, Yuno-ojosama. Let’s return.” (Morris)

“...I have found it. This is it.” (Yuno)

“Ojosama?” (Morris)

“Morris!!” (Yuno)

“Yes? What is it?” (Morris)

“Teach me things like the ones you did just now!” (Yuno)

“...Hah?” (Morris)

Yuno felt her whole body trembling.

The butler serving her father, Morris. He has always been by their side since young and he is basically family.

She has heard before that he is strong, but she didn’t have the chance to know with what weapon and in what way he fought.

She was obviously surprised that Morris could easily defeat a wasteland adventurer and a pretty decent one at that as if he were beating up a kid. But what made Yuno tremble even more was the splendid physical technique.

For Yuno, who was troubled over the spear or the bow and was worrying over which direction to take, the movements Morris showed looked like they were a heaven-sent for her.

She understands her own ability to assimilate things. She has the trait of being able to use most weapons to a decent degree. This had the strong point of being all-purpose, but it also meant that she was a jack of all trades and master of none which led to her worry.

But Yuno had seen a light in the path she should walk on.

The technique that would serve as the core to connect the usage of a variety of weapons.

She has finally met a martial art that could serve for her flexible style.

At this moment, she for the first time was grateful for her father forcefully making them return to Tsige.

Yuno's summer vacation began to move in this way.

Extra Story XVIII - A certain day at Tsige

What happened at summer ③

“Sif, go to Ringa for a bit.” (Risa)

“Pft?! Risa?! What are you saying all of a sudden?!” (Rembrandt)

Yuno had escaped from the house, but that made the security around Sif, who was thinking about doing the same, even tighter.

In other words, Sif couldn't escape from the house.

While serving tea to her smiling father, she ended up having an afternoon tea time with her Mother Risa at the garden.

She was secretly cursing Yuno as she had no choice but to pass the time with her family.

Different from her little sister Yuno, Sif had quickly found the path she would take, so she was planning on doing her best in training at Tsige so that she wouldn't lack behind on her other comrades.

Sif is stuck in terms of technique rather than the fighting style, so it was a different worry from her little sister.

Simply speaking, there was not enough time.

That's why Sif was quite persistent with Raidou in regards to staying in Rotsgard.

The time it took to reach Tsige and the time it would take to return to Rotsgard was precious for her after all.

And within all this, the words that her Mother Risa told her had surprised her. Ringa.

It is the first base that you will find in the wasteland after leaving Tsige.

It is on a several days distance from the town. For the adventurers that are seriously exploring, this is the first objective to reach.

Sif doesn't even have the level to leave to the wasteland, so it is a place she should have no relation to.

"M-Mother? I am not at a level where I can go to the wasteland yet..." (Sif)

Of course, Sif was also surprised, though not to the extent of her father.

"Ara, who said anything about going there as an adventurer? This is dangerous. You are beginning to resemble Yuno." (Risa)

When her daughter spoke about level, her mother lets out a sigh.

She mentioned her other daughter, who had left the house the very moment she returned.

But well, different from her father that would become useless whenever it comes to his daughters, the Mother Risa understood plenty well the nature of her daughters.

She had secretly made Morris tail Yuno.

"Eh, what do you mean by that?" (Sif)

"A small job has come regarding your father's work. It is a simple job though, but you were born in the wasteland, so you should experience work as well. Use teleportation and—" (Risa)

"Risa, there's no need to make her go to the wasteland! Like...right, how about sending her on an errand to the town of Koran or Kaido?" (Rembrandt)

"Dear, I told you that there was no need for our daughters to return even if it were just for one summer break, and yet, you went as far as using Raidou-sama to forcefully have them come back here. If we don't return them with some

experience, we will be laughed at. Isn't that right, Sif?" (Risa)

She was smiling. Risa's eyes were smiling, but there was not a single shred of kindness in them and it was a smile with quite the pressure.

The father and daughter that were complaining shut their mouth reflexively.

The fact that the father had forcefully made his daughters come back by using underhanded means, and that his daughters were in a foul mood; his wife was in the know of all this.

A while of silence.

"Do you understand? It is a simple job of going to Ringa and confirming the luggage that has arrived there. If it is you, there's no need to worry. I will send the list later, so confirm it then." (Risa)

"R-Risa..." (Rembrandt)

"Let the cute girls go on journeys', was it? Those were some nice words there, Dear." (Risa)

"Uuuh." (Rembrandt)

The attitude of Risa that didn't allow complains had the representative of a big company shut up.

"Now then, go prepare, Sif. You will be heading out early morning." (Risa)

"Ah, yes, Mother." (Sif)

Sif knows plenty well that her angry mother is the scariest in the family, so she had no choice but to nod.

"Dear, be a bit more resolute. If you showed half of the face you show at work, I wouldn't have to take this role, you know?" (Risa)

"But...when I look at Sif and Yuno, uhm...I simply end up like that."
(Rembrandt)

"Raidou-sama is also relying on that other side of you." (Risa)

"I will do my best. I...plan on fixing that." (Rembrandt)

"...Hah..." (Risa)

Her husband that would act without openings in work is exceedingly soft on his daughters to a helpless level.

Risa considers this to have already surpassed the realm of overprotective.

But if she were asked whether her husband who aims straightforwardly for status and money or this one is better, she would be troubled in deciding.

Risa considers his excessive parts as a charm of his as well, but it does bring headaches to her sometimes.

Heading to the teleport formation that's at the outside of Tsige without entering the wasteland; it sounds like a riddle, but it is actually pretty simple.

Utilizing the narrow path that leads from the town to the wasteland, Tsige profits from the gate that divides those two areas.

They simply gouged out a part of the wall of rock there and created a passage that leads from the gate to the teleport formation.

As a result, a clearly smaller building compared to the gate was at the wall rock of the wasteland.

But the costs for its maintenance and security are not that different from the gate.

As the pioneering of the wasteland advances, people other than adventurers entering the wasteland will prove necessary, and this place had been created for that purpose.

It is a place that was created by bringing the technique of the Limia Kingdom that is the most advanced in teleportation magic out of the hyumans.

Traversing the passage that doesn't reach the 1 km in distance as she received permission to cross several times as she went by, Sif reached an incredibly showy teleport formation she had never seen before. She had once again been reminded that the security in this place was incredibly high for the wasteland and that it is also a place that is treated as a luxury.

“There’s no problem with the documents.”

“I didn’t think I would have the honor of seeing Sif-ojosama personally. Is your father doing well?”

“He is doing well to the point that it is tiring for me. Also, father has told me to relay you the message that he will be counting on you for the remaining of the journey of today and tomorrow here.” (Sif)

“Oh! So we will be having a two day break?! I will certainly tell the others about this. This was a pretty rushed trip, so it really helps out.”

Sif was at the Ringa base.

She was walking around the several carriages with list in hand, making her look like she is doing work.

Sif had finished confirming the contents of the goods and, after finishing her talk with the one in charge, she told him the message of her father and gave him some money.

The one in charge took the money that was given to him for the sake of making a party for everyone.

“Hah... I am so tired. Just thinking this is one of the bases makes me nervous.”
(Sif)

She looks around the base she has never been to before.

If she were to take one step outside this place, she would be in the wasteland where there’s mamonos and demi-humans she can’t match, which made her unable to relax.

Sif makes a bitter smile at this undispellable tension she feels in this place that she has always been taught is a special environment.

“Oh? Oi~! Could you be Sif-ojosan?”

“Someone you know?”

Someone calls out to her while she was brooding.

When she saw the two familiar hyumans that were approaching her while one

was waving his hand, she felt a different kind of tension she hadn't felt for a while.

"You...Lime Latte?! And you are the adventurer...Toa-san, if I remember correctly." (Sif)

"We meet at an unusual place-su ne." (Lime)

"I am happy to hear that the daughter of the big Rembrandt family remembers my name. Nice to meet you, I am Toa." (Toa)

"I will of course know the name of the ace adventurer of Tsige. I know of Lime-san due to other reasons though..." (Sif)

"About that matter, I have already properly apologized to you and your father though. Wouldn't it be fine to get along better with me?" (Lime)

"Don't joke... No, my brain does understand. Just that, it is still difficult to be normal around you. Please do understand this." (Sif)

"...Well, I am indeed at fault here after all. Can't be helped. I will wait. So, what business do you have at a base?" (Lime)

Lime didn't pursue Sif's words and changed the topic.

He does feel guilty about the matter of the cursed disease hurting those girls.

He apologized to their father and it could be said that the matter had already been given a close, but he does not think that everything has been forgiven.

"I am helping out with the work of my father. I am simply checking goods though..." (Sif)

"Ah! The job we took since it was on the way, now that I think about it, it was from the Rembrandt Company." (Toa)

"Toa-san's group was the one doing the guarding. No wonder the arrival ended up only taking a few days. If it is such a close area like this, Toa-san's group wouldn't even break a sweat." (Sif)

Sif was slightly in admiration seeing these two that were standing in this base as if it had the same atmosphere as Tsige and praised that strength of theirs.

"..."

“...”

But Lime and Toa gave a vague smile at the words of Sif and stayed silent.

The deeper you go in the wasteland, the more dangerous it is. There's no mistaking that.

But in reality, even if it is at the close areas, the danger is still plenty.

Sif's words were the words of someone ignorant of the way the wasteland works.

But it is questionable whether she will be stepping into the wasteland as an adventurer in the future, so the two decided on letting that misunderstanding pass by without touching on it.

“Thanks to you guys, I was able to provide two days of break. Thank you very much.” (Sif)

“Acha, the two extra days are a break now huh. Then that means we will be bidding farewell since we will be leaving here tomorrow.” (Toa)

“Ah, is that so... Can you please wait for a bit more? I will talk with the person in charge about this, if possible, I would like some of your time to have a discussion...” (Sif)

“Okay. Then I will go and have a talk about this with him, so lady, since you have come all the way here, how about you check the place? Well then, Lime-san, I will be taking my leave.” (Toa)

“Roger. See ya later.” (Lime)

Toa stopped Sif from going and quickly passed by her.

‘Is being quick on acting and being skilled a trait of adventurers?’, is what Sif thought as she saw her leave.

“Lime Latte, what are you doing here?” (Sif)

“Me? Work, obviously. Today is mainly information gathering. Tomorrow I will be taking separate ways from Toa and will be heading to Saki.” (Lime)

“You are going to the wasteland on your own?!” (Sif)

“No, it will be with the Kuzunoha Company, so it will be three counting me.

Ah, right. If I remember correctly, Ojo-san, you use Spirit magic, right?" (Lime)

"...What about it?" (Sif)

Sif gave out thorny words.

It is because that's exactly the topic that she is been troubled by due to being unable to do enough training.

Being suddenly thrown this topic by Lime, she couldn't not feel as if he were taunting her.

"There's quite a lot of people at the bases that you don't see in Tsige. For example, in this Ringa, there's a user of similar spells like yours Ojo-san, even though it is of a slightly different element." (Lime)

"Similar to mine?" (Sif)

"That's right. A user of both Spirit magic and regular one. I was shown it once, but that person used an unusual method like mixing...or was it fusion?" (Lime)

"?!"

The words of Lime gave Sif a shock.

Because what he said at the latter part was exactly the type of mage that Sif is aiming to be.

"...Do you want to meet that person?" (Lime)

The words Lime said after leaving a slight space of time were words he said because he caught on the internal thoughts of Sif.

"...Someone you know?" (Sif)

"Yeah, a bit. But that person is from the demon race. If you don't mind that, I can guide you there." (Lime)

"Demon... That's..." (Sif)

Hearing the word 'demon race', Sif brooded over it.

Hyumans and demons are in the middle of war.

Even if it is a base in the wasteland and a place where the boundaries of races is thin, she still held a certain degree of opposition to it.

“It is not a person that holds hostility towards hyumans. In the wasteland, races don’t hold much meaning after all. For good or for bad, this is a place where we don’t pry on each other. Well, just think of that person as an eccentric within the demon race.” (Lime)

“...I want to try meeting that person.” (Sif)

After a while of silence, Sif answered Lime.

“Got it. Are you fine with going now?” (Lime)

“Yeah.” (Sif)

Lime told her to follow him and begins to walk with his back facing her.

Sif obediently follows him.

Since being involved with the Kuzunoha Company, her way of thinking towards other races that are not hyuman has changed quite a lot.

If it were before the time she was under the curse disease, she wouldn’t have met a demon even if it was necessary.

On the other hand, Lime was scratching his head with a wry smile as he guides Sif.

He is aware that he is being soft with Sif.

But he can’t help but feel guilty towards the Rembrandt sisters and their mother, so his words end up reflecting that guilt and he simply ends up wanting to give them a hand.

It is because he wants to repent for what he did, but it is also because he likes to look after others.

Lime was thoroughly tired of his own softness.

“Oi, Risui, are you alive?” (Lime)

Lime stops in front of a certain house.

Having a personal house in a base is, in a sense, proof that the person has decent strength, so that casual tone of Lime was not normal.

“Calling someone without honorifics... Ah, so it was you, Lime. I don’t really

need anything right now, you know? It also isn't payday yet... Hm? Who is that girl?" (Risui)

The one who opened the door was a woman that was slightly past her prime and felt as if her face was soon to show wrinkles.

Just as Lime said, she had a horn growing from her forehead and had the characteristic blue skin.

While fixing her glasses with her hand, she was looking at the visitors with a listless disposition.

"Today I came for a matter aside of the company. You probably don't know the company but, this lady here is from the Rembrandt Company in Tsige, Sif Rembrandt." (Lime)

"...Don't take me for a fool. I also know about the Rembrandt Company. I am surprised by the fact that you know each other though." (Risui)

"Nice to meet you, my name is Sif Rembrandt." (Sif)

"Yeah yeah. I am Risui. So? What's the meaning of this, Lime?" (Risui)

"Actually, this girl uses the same dual Spirit magic and regular magic as—" (Lime)

"Risui-san! Please teach me compound Spirit and regular magic!" (Sif)

Unable to wait for Lime to finish, Sif asked straight.

It was a tone as if she were cornered; a tone she rarely shows.

"..."

"...And there you have it. I also request this of you." (Lime)

"It is your specialty to bring in unusual people here, I see. It is not on the level of that Waka-sama you brought before though." (Risui)

Being suddenly asked a favour, Risui made a dumbfounded expression for a second, but she soon began to complain to Lime.

"It is as you see. I beg of you." (Lime)

Surprisingly, Lime lowered his head deeply.

“Please stop it. Seriously, you do this even when you somewhat could anticipate I can’t refuse. If in several days there’s nothing worth mentioning, I will kick her back. Is that okay?” (Risui)

“Yeah, I don’t mind. Also, this girl will definitely become big.” (Lime)

“Good grief. Prepare yourself for the next task. I will be ordering a lot of troublesome things to get all at once. Uhm, your name was Sif, right? Come in.” (Risui)

“Ah, yes.” (Sif)

“Well then, do your best, Ojo-san.” (Lime)

“I will at least say thanks.” (Sif)

“Okay.” (Lime)

After watching over Sif entering the house of Risui, Lime leaves the place himself.

“Who is the one that is the most bothered by it, you say? That would be me. Because you know, even if it didn’t go as discussed, it is the truth that I did something terrible to them, so it can’t be helped..... Now then, I heard that Sif-ojisan was stuck with the matter of compounding Spirit magic and regular magic, but with this, it should be fine now. In that case, the next one is Yunojosan huh. I think it would be best to find her a close-quarters weapon that might serve as her core, but...the issue is the lack of a lead. Fuh...I was told this by Boss as well but, aren’t I one step away from being a stalker? Let’s be careful.” (Lime)

Lime was keeping tabs regarding the situation of the Rembrandt sisters and had a rough understanding of what they were bothered about.

Even if it is due to his sense of guilt, it was still conscientious of him.

If there was interest as a member of the opposite gender in those actions of his, it would be legit stalkerish, but right now, that’s not the case.

Lime disappears into the hustle and bustle of the base as he grumbles.

Even if it was made possible by Lime, Sif Rembrandt had met a mage in Ringa who uses the same kind of magic as her.

Just like Yuno who had seen the physical techniques of Morris; these encounters were revolutionary for the two sisters.

Sif and Yuno were beginning to stop cursing the fact that they couldn't stay in Rotsgard and were seeing it positively, looking forward to the time when they meet their friends so they can surprise them.

On the other hand, this meant that the time their father had with his daughters was shaved off and it led to him suffering, and Morris, who was left with the task of shouldering this, was caught between a rock and a hard place as he also suffered as well, but compared to the joy of seeing how the two sisters were growing in such a dazzling manner, this suffering was trifling.

Extra Story XIX - A certain day at Asora ③

Plain in Asora.

A herd of cows and sheeps were eating grass.

Even with two spread out herds, there was still plenty remaining space in this vast land.

“This place is so big.”

“Indeed~.”

“There has been talk about whether we can use Liz as sheep herding dogs.”

“Liz huh. They might actually be fit for the job.”

Beautiful girls, that would be described as being way too beautiful to be shepherds, were having a heartwarming conversation at a slightly separated location from the herd of sheeps.

Gorgons.

Not long ago, they had sealed their ability to see and were living a constrained life at the wasteland. A race of solely girls.

They were presented the possibility to migrate to a dreamlike place like Asora and, after the interview, they all decided to migrate, and thus, brings it to what is seen now.

Their role here is to raise the animals that would seem as if they would be of use as livestock, and there is also their original specialty that is sewing to make clothes.

The girls said that they would do anything, so Ema had given them their respective jobs.

It is a race with a decent number, and their ‘fighting ability’ is high. That’s the reason why they were given the job of raising the animals of the wild.

In reality, the crazy talk about making a Liz as a herding dog the girls were speaking of, it isn’t that strange of a thing.

They are strong.

Even the cows and sheeps are strong.

When thinking about the present livelihood of Asora, it does sound weird, but the animals that live originally in Asora are abnormally strong.

To the point that the fighting race that are the Mist Lizards sometimes get injured in their hunts.

They don't hold special abilities, but they have strong raw power and speed.

The wasteland mamonos that Tomoe brought on a whim in the past have long been exterminated by them.

The ram of a cornered sheep is strong enough to give fatal wounds, so the mamonos that were thrown in were the pitiful ones.

There was an instance when a herd of cows had panicked and the mamonos were stamped to death by their charge. May they rest in peace.

"I heard that there were Liz here in the past though?"

"Tomoe-sama had thrown in a whole pack of them in here before and they had survived for a decent while, but I heard that they got involved with the wolves and got slaughtered~."

"Ah, wolves... I have never seen them, but they are apparently crazy strong. Looks like, rather than having the Mist Lizards defeat them, there was a proposal of letting them live in isolation and Waka-sama approved of it."

"If it is Waka-sama, no matter how strong the other party is, wouldn't he be able to do something about it?"

"Apparently, he said that it can't be helped if it is the wolves. I sometimes don't understand what that personage thinks."

"He has not invited anyone after all."

"A girl had invited him before, but he distracted her by giving her a hair catalog."

"Ah, that. It was definitely a nice present."

"Fashion sure is fun."

Different from the cow group, the sheep group girls were able to take it relatively easy.

Gorgons have slightly different circumstances to other races.

Their sense of sight was basically nonexistent in the past, so there were naturally inconveniences with it. There's also the point that there's the need of men of other races in order to maintain their race.

With their sight being freed now, their interests have been spreading greedily. There's been some that enjoy cooking, ones that learn to dress up, and ones that awaken to making clothes and ornaments to wear; a lot of things that were making them pass their days busily.

There's also been a good amount that have shown interest in pottery that has been a craze in Asora.

Regarding the latter part about requiring men to procreate, the orcs were the present candidates, but because their mating seasons didn't match and the morals of the Highland Orcs were abnormally high, it was a pretty difficult situation.

The ruler of this Asora, Misumi Makoto, is also a target of the Gorgons -or more like, it is their highest objective. However, this hasn't been fulfilled.

For the Gorgons, that already have a good percent in heat, this is a pressing matter they have to resolve. They need to secure partners as soon as possible.

This matter had been slightly addressed in the interview they had with Makoto. There are a few hyumans who wander into Asora, so there are a good percent of them who have had relations with the Gorgons.

But this isn't only unstable, the numbers are also not enough.

Currently, there's a negotiation of having Makoto get involved with the hyuman settlements.

The girls think that, if that negotiation goes well, the situation will be completely resolved.

"Now that I think about it, I heard that they are having quite the difficulty in the talk about us going out to this town called Tsige."

“Ah, it apparently has progressed. It seems like Waka-sama had been troubled for a while, but lately, his attitude has changed.”

“Hm~. Well, we may be hyuman-shaped, but we are not even demi-humans but mamonos. Of course Waka-sama would be discreet with us.”

“Ah, this wavy hair looks quite nice.”

“Ah?! You got a sketch of it?! I want to see too!!”

“This long one looks good. It feels like it might be a hit for the boys. I am already at the time where I would like to have a baby.”

“Regardless of time, you are a girl that’s in default wanting men though.”

“Now that I think about it, I haven’t seen Lime-san lately.”

“The only one who is available at all seasons was him after all. We all may have ended up relying on him a bit too much. Being in heat all the year is impressive, isn’t it. In a sense, that’s even more than us, don’t you think?”

“Ahaha. Could it be that Lime-san had given up and asked Waka-sama to have him go to Tsige?”

“No way~.”

““Ahahaha...””

A quite the radical conversation that doesn’t fit the heartwarming atmosphere continued in the plains.

The animals were uncaring about this and were playing around or munching on grass.

They don’t know that about this ‘no way’.

The unexpected hyuman that can enter and leave Asora, Lime Latte. He is still a young and healthy man. He of course also loves women.

In the past, it was on the level where you could say he has played around with enough women to fill up a town.

That’s why his relationship with the Gorgons felt like a part of his work.

Able to play around without any need for future trouble. Or rather, that was

what the other party wishes.

For the men whose main objective is to play around with women, those are dreamlike conditions.

And the Gorgons would, in a sense, do it with one partner after the other without any ulterior motive.

At first,

that's what Lime thought as well as he was elated.

'The paradise of men is right here!', is what he thought as he tasted a cycle of being invited.

Without giving a specific number, whenever Lime was there, he would do his best for up to two digits, so you could say he was peerless.

But there's a limit to everything.

In time, the fun became putting effort, and his feet felt distant.

Even with that, when Lime was in Asora, they would search for him and be taken away.

Lime struggled by thinking this is something he originally wished for, but he, in the end, prostrated to Makoto.

Having a worn-out Lime suddenly prostrate before him, Makoto was obviously confused, but as he heard the situation, his face got strained and he understood.

There's always several tens of partners.

It is not something that Lime alone can do his best to resolve.

Lime spoke in tears to Makoto that he wanted to beat up his past self that thought of monopolizing this.

After this confession, Makoto began to consider in a positive light to help in the creation of a store for the Gorgons in Tsige.

That's why the harmless talk of the Gorgons was actually true, even if the persons themselves don't know.

“Eh? Hey, isn’t the one flying over there, Shona-san?”

“Ah, true. Does she have some business with our chief?”

“They migrated at the same period as us, so there’s a sense of closeness to them, the winged-kin.”

“It would be nice if we could enjoy ourselves with them as well in the near future.”

“In the end, I think the problem is marriage. We are going to be living here, so don’t you think we have to study in that aspect as well?”

“You are just repeating what the Chief said.”

“Ah, was I busted?”

“Ah, the cow group Ane-sans are coming over. Crap. Did we get way too lax?”

“But the sheeps are truly docile and easy to manage after all. Of course you would get lax~.”

When they caught their eyes on the winged-kin that was flying overhead, Shona, who is in essence the number two of the higher ups of the winged-kin, their conversation was switched to her.

And from there, their conversation topic was once again switched to another unexpected direction as their day passed.

“The milk and wool is quite popular. I have said this before but, please let us cooperate.”

“Thank you very much. When we actually began, we noticed that this is actually a job that requires a good amount of people, so if we were to increase the scale, there would be worries with only us. Waka-sama had already told me beforehand that: ‘The winged-kin can fly, so we would be able to put that in use and, if it is possible, you should work together’.”

The chief of the Gorgons was facing a female winged-kin with a desk in between them as they have a talk with smiles in their faces.

“It looks like raising the cows and sheeps has succeeded until now, but if we

are going to do this together, would it be better to have each side take care of the cows and the other of sheeps?" (Shona)

"No. In regards to the cows and sheeps, let us do it ourselves for now. We are still listing a number of animals that can be used as livestock after all. So let's decide after that's settled."

"I see. Taking care of the new ones huh." (Shona)

The winged-kin girl Shona falls silent.

If it comes to keeping new animals, she was thinking that this would be quite the difficult job.

Of course, when they are actually going to begin, they will be taking out a certain amount of knowledge from Makoto, and they can also get advice from the Gorgons that have actual experience in raising livestock.

The individual problems arising from these are a different matter, but it will definitely serve as a big help.

They will most likely have an easier time than if they were to start animal raising from zero.

"Yes. The first recommended livestock would be the goats. They have a smaller build than cows and, in terms of personality, they are decently manageable. They are not affected by slopes and like high places. Since you have the ability to fly, I think you guys are more suited."

"I see. The Gorgons would like to concentrate on the cows and sheeps, right?" (Shona)

"If I had to be specific, it would be the cows. They certainly do provide delicious milk and, on top of that, their meat is also an incredible delicacy, but their nature is so violent to the point that it sometimes makes us question if they are truly fit to be livestock. Waka-sama was also surprised by this, but he wanted to focus on domesticating them for a while. Next, there's the small birds called chickens which we are also thinking of breeding."

"Chickens huh." (Shona)

"If your race doesn't have evasiveness towards other races with wings, it

would help us a lot if you were to take that job as well."

"Thanks for the consideration. There's most likely no problem of that nature but, just in case, can you please show me the real thing?" (Shona)

"Understood."

"But...I thought that cows were docile in nature. To think you were facing those kind of problems." (Shona)

Shona returns the conversation to the cows.

The serious expression of the Gorgon chief left an impression in her and she ended up returning to them.

"There have been a number of injured. Taking care of the cows is a job that you can't lower your guard. Waka-sama said they are docile and easy to domesticate, so we thought at first that the sheeps were the cows. Unbelievable."

The sheeps were actually easy to domesticate and there haven't been any glaring problems occurring.

The people taking care of them don't have to pay constant attention to them.

But the cows are a series of tribulations.

Even within the Gorgons, taking care of the cows is treated as a job that only the elite can do.

But well, even if it is the elites, they simply petrify them whenever a problem occurs and have the Arkes or Shiki undo it, and there are even times when even Makoto has to take care of it.

In the case of cows, there's also the need of high physical and combat prowess.

When all options run out, they can use petrification and, at times, they would evade; there's no doubt that's part of the reason they were left with the job of raising the animals.

And in reality, there have been a number of cases where they required the petrification, and one time where Makoto had to come personally to deal with

it.

“Waka-sama is out of standards in a lot of things after all. Our strength hasn’t been acknowledged yet either, so the patriarchs are doing their best in training everyday.” (Shona)

“I think you have plenty enough strength though. Must be the battle affinities.”

“Really. That part is truly difficult. We are originally good at dealing with archers, but that person is on a whole different level. At any rate, if we can get involved with the raising of animals, the teams of mixed races that mostly go out hunting will have to explore and pioneer areas as well. In that chance, we winged-kins will have Waka-sama acknowledge us so that our elites can also join them.” (Shona)

“That spirit is great. We have to learn from you people—”

“Onee-chaaan! I was told that it has been finished!! They are calling you to the workshop~~!!”

“...”

The loud voice that came from outdoors made the Gorgon chief make a troubled expression as she looked at her winged guest.

“My little sister is like that... I have shown you an embarrassing sight. But to think it is already done... I am thankful, but the timing is bad.”

The chief apologizes to Shona.

“Don’t worry about it. She is quite the lively one. It looks like it is an important business, so I don’t really mind. Well then, I will be taking my leave for today.” (Shona)

“I am sorry that I can’t guide you in the end. I will soon call for someone to show you the chickens, so please forgive me. I will be taking my leave now.”

Shona sees off the chief.

The winged-kin is left alone in the room.

(That is the Gorgon race. The race that has the invincible petrifying ability that

turns you into stone no questions asked. But even that is powerless in face of Waka-sama. Even his strength that was difficult to control has been made possible to control thanks to the help of his equipment. Seriously, this is a place where common sense doesn't work. We had confidence in our fighting style that ruled over the skies, and yet, with the Highland Orcs, with our advantage of the sky, it would be an even match, however, if the limitations to magic are taken out, we would be inferior; with the Mist Lizards, as long as we are in the sky, it is fine, but we are always hit when we are in need to resupply in our base, so we always lose. The harsh part is that our attacks aren't really effective. If it is due to lacking training drills in Asora, it would be a lost case though. But most of all, it is Waka-sama...) (Shona)

Shona sinks into comparing their combat strength to the other races.

The winged-kin are by no means weak.

If they were to participate in enough training drills of Asora, they will in time be able to stand side by side with the Orcs and Lizards.

They might not be able to match them in their variety of spells or in one on one fights, but they have the overwhelming advantage that is the sky.

But that sky has become a big bottleneck against the ruler of this Asora, Makoto.

“Shona-sama, sorry for the wait. Regarding the chickens and the goats, I will be guiding you to the place where I can show them to you. Would you like to check out the cows and sheeps as well?”

“Ah, sorry for the trouble. Right. Can you show them all in one run? I think they can serve as good reference.” (Shona)

“Understood. I am not that knowledgeable about sheeps, but let's have that part be explained by the sheep group girls at the location in question. Regarding the cows and the others, I will be doing the explaining.”

“Thanks, I will be counting on you.” (Shona)

While having a good impression of the guide girl that was progressing the conversation promptly, she follows after her with the mindset that she must learn about the new job of the winged-kin; raising livestock.

Forgetting for now their most troubling point that is their combat strength - no, the training drills to win against Makoto, she had decided that, rather than worrying about something that has no way of resolving in the near future, it would be more beneficial to learn about the livestock at the Gorgon village.

Shona thought that this was a job worth doing and unconsciously smiled. She was secretly thinking that maybe she should specialize in this field.

The new jobs in Asora were progressing decently.

Extra Story XX - A certain day at Asora ④

Winged-kin.

If you had to categorize them as mamonos or demi-humans, they would be demi-humans.

If Gorgons are mamonos close to being hyumans, the winged-kin would be hyumans close to being mamonos.

It is a quite strong race that has mastered the air superiority and utilizes both attack and defense expertly. This power is obviously also shown in Asora, and they are able to obtain pretty decent results in the mixed races training.

The Winged-kin evaluate themselves as being unable to match the Orcs and Lizards, but in reality, in terms of getting used to the equipment the Elder Dwarfs made and the training drills of Asora, in other words, taking advantage of the strong parts of the previous residents of Asora, you could say they are working pretty well.

The Lizards and Orcs are feeling the reliableness of their new comrades that rule the skies and felt the need of more training.

In other words, they were evaluated pretty highly.

...There's just one thing; excluding the ruler of Asora, Misumi Makoto.

“...How was today?”

“The first group was one minute, sir!”

“It hasn't changed much since last time...”

While organizing the results of the training that day, one of the Winged-kin leaders knitted his eyebrows.

There's a variety of races in Asora, but they respect and coexist with each other.

The strong and weak get their jobs and put efforts in the management of the central land and there's also the pioneering of new land.

The Winged-kin have high ability in business, and the document work that the Highland Orcs were basically monopolizing, was now being done together with them.

With views to the future, they are thinking of sending people to the armed forces and the pioneering. At the same time, there was talk about them working together with the Gorgons on animals centered mostly in pasturage.

Their numbers are high, so they are rookies that others hold high expectations for.

But there's one area that's not going well for the Winged-kin.

The joining to the armed force and pioneering has been postponed for the future and their cooperation to dangerous places as well.

Whether one can participate in these kind of things or not is normally decided by Makoto, and his followers, Tomoe and Shiki, would further that process by deciding on the formation of the groups.

And so, they are stuck at the Makoto part.

It is a matter that doesn't proceed at all without the permission of Makoto.

"Shona-sama has received talk from Shiki-sama regarding the breeding of animals so, wouldn't Waka-sama know of our battle prowess?"

One of the winged-kin at the meeting room made a complicated expression as he gives his opinion to the Patriarch.

"Yeah, Shiki-sama did say something to that effect. But the decision was apparently affected heavily by the advantage that we can fly. He probably hasn't acknowledged us in terms of pure battle prowess." (Patriarch)

“We have never lost in such a clean manner before after all.”

A man older than the Patriarch showed a bitter smile.

Being at a higher altitude from your opponent creates an overwhelming advantage.

There's the option of attacking in the sky, and there's also tactics for attack and defense in the air in this world as well.

The Winged-kin faced Makoto's training with the same tactic as the one they used on the other mock battles with the other races, but the result was an utter defeat.

In less than three minutes, the elites of the Winged-kins were all shot down and were all send back.

The bow and the fire and water magic are Makoto's weapons.

The days where Makoto uses only magic to instant wipe the units that have gone out separately continued.

It was the source of the Patriarch's headache.

“To think we would be shot down by a bow and magic.”

“Until now, those kind of people would all fall prey to us though.”

Sighs were being let out here and there.

The advantage of the Winged-kin is that they can fly in the sky, however, their weak point is also the sky.

The sky normally doesn't have any obstructions. It is easy to target with ranged weapons and magic.

That's why they dealt with that weak point immediately.

They gained high understanding of the wind element and increased their resistances. The number one most suited sniping spell towards the sky and viceversa are the wind element spells, and they had thoroughly mastered it.

Also, in order to get away from the spells and arrows, they increased their altitude even more and trained their elites.

Thinking about it normally, having high wind element strength is superior to having anti-air attacks against flying opponents, so it meant that the Winged-kin could one-sidedly attack the other party.

From an altitude that's outside the range of the opponent, they can shoot with attacks that are within their range after all.

The enhanced arrows would lose strength the higher the distance, and in most cases, even the wind barrier of the normal soldiers of the Winged-kin could deflect them.

The establishment of this style was also connected to the social standing based on the wing colors.

The white winged ones that can fly at high speed and at high altitudes are called *Alkators*. Them having a high social standing might have been an inevitability. Their physical strength itself isn't that high, but in terms of magic power, they were top class as well. They are treated as born elites. <

アルカトル>

There's also the black winged ones known as *Pages*. They are not suited for high speed flying, but they can bring out high altitudes. Their flying ability in battle is low, but they possess strong physical strength and their magic power is comparable to that of the Alkators. <

ペイジ>

Because they divided the roles and authority by fighting prowess in order to reduce the casualties, it brought the current social structure they have.

They live at the top part of cliffs, so there was practically no need to do defensive battles which most likely served as a heavy influential factor as well.

Since the circumstances vary in Asora, the Patriarch that is the family head was doing his best while losing sleep daily.

"Should we increase the altitude even more so that Waka-sama can't grasp our location?"

"If we do that, we wouldn't be able to grasp Waka-sama's location either, so wouldn't it be pointless?"

“How about we have the attackers go to the very limits of their attack range and have a spotter tell the attacker the place where he should shoot it?”

“In that case, we would need a way to precisely tell the location on the ground that must be attacked. It might be good to adopt the use of coordinates that’s applied when separating maps.”

“There would be the need of coordination, so several spotters would be required. Who knows how many sacrifices would be made to grasp the location of Waka-sama.”

“It might have been a fluke, but in the past, a Page managed to deflect the Bridd of Waka-sama, even if only a bit. If it is them, there’s a few in the advanced attack groups that can use thought transmission. Wouldn’t they be suited for the job?”

“That’s a tactic that uses the Pages as sacrificial pawns. We are currently planning a strategy in order to decrease the sacrifices as much as possible, so thinking in a completely contrary path is a bit questionable.”

“But pray say, how are we going to make that person acknowledge us with the current fighting style we have? Even when we fly on top of the clouds, not only do we have no chance to do attack spells, we are shot down in the middle of deploying our defensive magic!”

The place was tense.

With the Patriarch simply bringing out the proposal of increasing the altitude, the Winged-kins in charge of strategy that were participating in this meeting began to exchange opinions.

Sadly to say, it looks like they were unable to reach an effective way yet.

The Patriarch in question had simply brought out this as one idea.

They didn’t predict there would be an opponent that would be able to target them at distances that not even their most competent snipers would think of doing so and hit them with attacks that are impossible to evade.

Rendering ranged weapons useless, the Winged-kin make one-sided attacks. The thorough success in that kind of fighting style was the reason why they

were able to keep such a scale in their tribe even when in the wasteland, so it can't be helped they wouldn't be able to predict this.

“...Uhm...”

When the discussion had reduced in heat, a single Page had raised his hand.

In this place, the representatives of all four kinds of wings were present. Of course, the lowest standing that is the black winged ones were also no exception.

Only the winged ones of their respective colors would know well about themselves.

That's why this system was in place.

But even with that, he must have been aware of how low his standing is, the boy raised his hand and was showing nervousness in his frail-looking face.

“Hm? What is it?”

The Patriarch silenced the place first before waiting for his words.

“There was an opinion about us deflecting the attack of Waka-sama even if only a bit.”

“Yeah.” (Patriarch)

“That is the truth. It is something that I proposed and we managed to achieve.”

“...Hoh.” (Patriarch)

“The spells of Waka-sama are accurate to a fearsome level. Once he has targeted you, it would be a despairing situation where not even the Alkators would be able to evade. Moreover, the strength of the attack is apparently held back by quite a bit, but it wouldn't be a mistake to take it as an instant kill.”

“...Continue.” (Patriarch)

The Patriarch stopped the other three colored wings that were about to object to what the Page boy was saying and urged him to continue.

“But if we were to face him using our control in barrier to its maximum output and with our physical strength, we might be able to deflect one or maybe even

two attacks as we endure.”

“““!!”””

“...That’s why, I think that if we were to grasp the coordinates and keep the contact frequent, it would be possible to attack Waka-sama from an even higher altitude.”

At the end, the boy showed as much confidence he could muster in his frail face as he proposes this to the Patriarch.

This was simply an agreement to an already given proposal, but since it was rare for the Page to be aggressive in joining the discussion, it gathered the attention of the surroundings.

“It is true that if you can certainly escape the attacks of Waka-sama, there would be no report as great as that.”

“T-Thank y—”

“But, that’s too naive.”

“Uh, eh?”

“There’s no assurance that the sniping of Waka-sama would miss in a higher altitude after all. The plan that you agreed to would require quite the amount of training time, and it would be on the assumption that Waka-sama’s sniping range is lower than the altitude we can go.” (Patriarch)

Even though the Patriarch himself brought this topic, he was holding doubts as to whether they would be able to escape the aim of Makoto by flying higher.

“That’s...just as you say.”

“There’s no need to feel down. Because you have taught us one certain thing after all.” (Patriarch)

“A certain thing?”

“That’s right. You Pages can block the attack of Waka-sama, right?” (Patriarch)

“If it is one of our soldiers, then at least one attack can be certainly blocked..... Of course, that is if the attack power stays as it currently is though.”

At the last part, he showed weakness, but the boy nods at what the Patriarch

says.

For the Patriarch, these were words that brought joy.

That's because he heard from Tomoe and Makoto himself that there won't be changes in the attack power for a while.

They didn't have the leeway to feel ashamed by the announcement that they are going easy on them.

"This is splendid. Oi, we will be extending the meeting. Listen well, in the mock battle with Waka-sama three days from now, we will be taking victory. If we let that chance escape, because of things like attending the Academy Festival and all that, the next chance will be in more than one month. Let's show that person that our strength not only lies in flying!" (Patriarch)

The words of strong resolve from the Patriarch made heat run in the place as if it were before a war, even when it was a strategy meeting.

Because their affinity against Makoto was bad, the Winged-kin were not judged fairly. Without knowing this, they increased their strength.

Their growth moved the other races and this created a sudden increase in the fighting power of Asora as a whole.

Makoto wasn't aware yet of this ripple effect that had been created.

Extra Story XXI - At that time, Modern day

⑥

Several months have passed in Japan since the time Misumi Makoto was transported from the world and disappeared.

The year had changed and it was about to change in month.

There were no actual big incidents occurring and the time passed peacefully.

This town where Misumi Makoto had been born and raised in was like a visual novel's setting.

It is decently accessible, has a decent assortment of establishments; it was that kind of half-baked town.

The incredibly good looking shopping district at the back of the station also held that trait. It sold food that was popular at that time, had a decent amount of brand fashion, and it even fulfilled certain niche areas.

The making of this shopping district was successful to the point you could say they wrung out all their ideas into it.

This had become one of the general spots for many people to go in their free days.

“It is finally the day to debut this SSD.”

“We were prioritizing the graphic card, so it took a bit of time. We can’t use the work pc for games. Gotta be careful of the watch of our families after all.”

“A second PC, even when it was made with money we earned ourselves, it still is difficult. I want to go to college soon and live alone.”

“Right. It has already been decided which university we are going, so it would be fine to just jump grades.”

“Well, let’s just be satisfied that we can pass our last high school year playing online games.”

“At the Comiket in summer, let’s find a random room in Tokyo. One that can go to Akihabara.”

“That sounds nice. A room for two huh. Even if it is a shared room, one that is plenty wide would be ideal. Our electronic stores and avenues are reasonably good, but as expected, if we can go to Akihabara, it would be better.”

At a part of the shopping district, there’s an area with several PC shops lined up where two young ones were conversing as they walk.

In their hands, there’s already a bag of one of the stores, and even though it is still before noon, the two had already finished their shopping.

“Hey, changing the topic...”

“Yeah?”

“That Makoto, what do you think actually happened to him? No matter how much we investigated, we couldn’t get his location at all. Not only that, even a weird name came out.”

“...I don’t think Makoto has such a dangerous face to him or connections though. We ended up at a name that’s definitely bad news after all.”

The name of Misumi Makoto had appeared at the conversation of the two.

When this happened, the slightly relaxed mood they had, changed into one with slight tension.

“It is the ‘Healer’, you know? That fantastical existence that is say to heal everything as long as you pay the price.”

“Its connections are wide, and at the very least, it is not someone that you can hack. No matter the amount of lives you have, it wouldn’t be enough. I feel like, even if we were to succeed, we would be erased.”

“Why did such a big name show up when we were simply investigating the safety of our classmate?”

“And Makoto’s family as well. That photo was real? That’s definitely a fake family.”

“Do you think Makoto has the photoshopping skills to do that? It is most likely real. There’s no need to hide it.”

“...Misumi Hayato and Misumi Yukiko do exist after all. What an envious guy he is.”

“A writer father and a famous judo practitioner older sister huh. Her little sister was karate, right? How to say it, it also makes me pity him a bit.”

“His little sister, Mari-tan huh... Even now, I still think that is CG. There’s no way someone like that actually exists. It is totally in my strike zone.”

“It is the little sister of Makoto. Don’t try anything. I thought your pedo tastes were only limited to foreigners, but they also apply on japanese people huh. First time I knew of that.”

“Cute is justice. Listen well, Mari-tan has the prospects to become a religious target, you know?”

“Please, don’t say that with a straight face. My ears will rot.”

“...Mari-tan.”

“Oi, give it a break already.”

“No, over there.”

“Eh?”

The conversation of the two classmates of Makoto had been interrupted with the two looking at one place.

They are friends of Makoto and from the same class, their names are Amano Hisayoshi and Koga Mamoru.

Amano’s in-game name is ‘NoonCat’ and Koga’s is ‘NightCat’.

The very culprits that taught Makoto of online gaming.

They are his classmates in high school, and yet, the trigger that served as their encounter as friends was when they met at the vicinity of a Cat Cafe. A strange friendship.

Their number one common point between them and Makoto is that they like cats -they don’t own one though. In other words, they are cat friends and dream of the day when they can raise one.

They all have the issue of having a member of their family being allergic to them, so they understood well that this was hard to achieve.

The two have high computer skills and information gathering, and they do have more connections in their class aside from Makoto, but it looks like they were worried about Makoto who had suddenly disappeared, and were investigating in their own way.

Their investigation arrived at an unimaginable name, so they were having trouble, which could be picked up from the conversation before.

“That’s the little sister of Makoto.” (Amano)

“The live Mari-tan has appeared.” (Koga)

The two didn’t know the faces of Makoto’s family until now, but as they investigated, they learned first that his body was weak in his childhood and

many other things. They also arrived at a simple profile of his family.

That's how they learned that the girl that gives out an unfitting atmosphere in this place where electronic stores were lined up was Misumi Mari -Makoto's sister.

"What is she doing here? Maybe she wants a computer since she is going to be in high school next year?" (Amano)

"Mari-tan is a pure girl that loves karate and literature, you know? By the way, the one she likes the most is The Red and the Black by Stendhal." (Koga)

"...That's a stalker level that would make me want to report you to the police later, Koga. Not only literature, you don't read anything aside from erotic light novels." (Amano)

"What did you say? It is a masterpiece where the main character obtained glory yet headed to destruction, and the women that surround him were splendidly written too. The wife was specially good." (Koga)

"...Don't tell me...you read it?" (Amano)

"It is the book that Mari-tan likes. Of course I would." (Koga)

"Don't lie. At least make your favorite girl be a young high-class lady. A wife being your favorite with those pedophilic likes of yours? It would be exposed immediately that you just gave a glance to a book summary." (Amano)

"..."

"..."

"How could you tell?" (Koga)

"I read it last year with the recommendation of Makoto. It is true that it is long and it has difficult wording, but it was interesting." (Amano)

"But the thickness... I could only see it as a weapon." (Koga)

"If you don't go for the hard cover and search for it at a library, you can deceive yourself a bit with the looks." (Amano)

"I will challenge it when I find the chance. Right now it is about Mari-tan, right?" (Koga)

“Looks like she is troubled by something.” (Amano)

“Ah, then, let’s go.” (Koga)

Koga walks brazenly towards Mari.

“O-Oi! What are you going to do by going there?!” (Amano)

“Obviously, to bring it to full light that I am a friend of Makoto and get along with her.” (Koga)

“Since when did you get such decisiveness?” (Amano)

“...Since the moment I saw her.” (Koga)

Pushing out the beer belly he has even though he is a high schooler, his eyes shine and he shows off his resolve.

“Disgusting.” (Amano)

It was as if he didn’t care at all about what was told to him.

There was no hesitation from Koga.

Amano sighs as he follows after him thinking that it would be bad to leave Makoto’s sister alone with Koga.

Amano is calm.

That’s because he loves Milfs.

“Eh? Captain. Isn’t that the little sister of Misumi-senpai?”

“Ah, true. That’s Mari-chan. It has already been settled that she will be going to our school, and she apparently has showed herself at the karate club a number of times. The captain Yoriko happily said that she has strength and decisiveness. But why is she at that place?”

“She is at the stores where there’s things like computers. It looks like she is being spoken to by guys. Nuku-min, looks like you will have a rival next year.”

The three girls stop their feet in the shopping district after seeing a familiar face.

The person they saw was the little sister of a close friend of them that they

met at a bookstore before.

The one they called as the captain seemed to be the one that knew her the best.

"Ah, now that you mention it, she does karate, right? It looks like she is troubled though. What should we do?"

"Right. We can't just let it go by."

"Eh~, isn't it fine to leave it? If it is those two, Mari-chan would be able to easily defeat them. What are they thinking? Like seriously, look at a mirror and your hobbies first before trying to pick up girls."

"...Yanase-san, you know those two?"

The senior and junior of the archery club, Azuma Yukari and Hasegawa Nukumi, were thinking of helping her, but the remaining one that is of the same archery club and has a lot of inquisitiveness, Yanase Haruko, didn't feel like there was the need to.

"If I remember correctly, they are from the same class as Misumi-senpai. Names are Koga and Amano. They are PC otakus and don't have athletic ability. Or rather, it feels as if I am looking at people that will die as otakus." (Haruko)

"...Are they students at our school? Hah.. Let's go, you two." (Azuma)

"Yes!" (Nukumi)

"E-Eh?! We are going?! Can't be helped." (Haruko)

Haruko follows after the two that had walked off as she lets out a feeling of being choiceless.

Even so, she has already taken out her digital camera to record it if anything interesting happens, so it is not as if she is totally against the idea.

"Ah, as I said, I don't know much about it either..." (Mari)

When Yukari arrives at the place, there was Mari troubled by the two guys that are apparently the classmates of Makoto.

"If that's the case, the scope would be pretty wide. That's troubling."

"Can't think of anything else? We are the friends of Makoto, so we want to be

of hel—”

“Okay, that’s as far as you go.” (Azuma)

The two turn back at the voice and, there, they see three girls the same age as them. Moreover, people they know.

“Azuma-san and the first year, Hasegawa, and there’s also...a paparazzi?”

“No, this girl is the one that created that strange ranking and was going about information and stuff...a paparazzi?”

“I am not! Why do you know all that but don’t know my name?! Amano and Koga. At any rate, get away from Mari-chan!” (Haruko)

“...Why are we being called without honorifics by a first year?” (Amano)

“It is not -chan, it is -tan!” (Koga)

“Mamoru, please tone down the heat. Like, I beg you.” (Amano)

“Picking up a middle school student. I don’t think that’s a nice hobby there. Mari-chan seems to be troubled.” (Azuma)

“That girl is Misumi-senpai’s little sister. Uhm, please spare her.” (Nukumi)

Amano and Koga look at each other’s face.

They felt that they are being incredibly misunderstood here.

And if they were to leave the misunderstanding go, the pictures in the digital camera of the first year girl who was calling them without honorifics will be used for evil.

“W-Wait a bit. We are not trying to pick up anyone. We know that this girl is the little sister of Makoto. We also know that she practices karate. That’s... something we heard from Makoto.” (Amano)

Amano lies about Makoto telling them on the spur of the moment.

The way they got that information isn’t something praiseworthy, and it is not something that they can tell them, so Amano didn’t want to touch that topic.

“T-That’s right. We are not picking up anyone.” (Koga)

“Then why is Mari-chan so troubled? There’s no way she would be troubled

by simply being called.” (Azuma)

Azuma goes in between Mari and the two with arms crossed.

Haruko and Nukumi stand at the back of the two as if cutting them off.

“Around this area is where the parts shops are gathered. That’s why, if you are not knowledgeable about computers, you wouldn’t come here -especially girls.” (Amano)

“W-We simply called out to her b-because she looked troubled. Wouldn’t you think of helping the little sister of a friend if they are troubled?” (Koga)

Feeling nervous at this situation where they are surrounded, Amano and Koga explain.

It is not as if they were thinking of anything bad after all. Can’t say the same for ulterior motives, but those words were their true intentions.

But the expression of the three girls were still those of doubt.

“Ah, Senpais! Sorry, it is not like that. Actually...” (Mari)

The words that would save those two boys came from Mari who was silent until now.

It was a situation where it felt as if it would turn sour, so Mari began to explain the situation to dissolve the misunderstanding of her seniors.

She told them about the fact that she was allowed to use the computer of her absent brother since she is soon to enter high school.

But when she turned it on, there was no reaction.

She memoed the name of the parts and the manufacturers and came to ask about it, but with the explanation of the amateur Mari, the shop assistants couldn’t reach a conclusion, and it was in a state of confusion.

When she gave up and left the store, she met Amano and Koga, and heard what they had to say.

The wariness of the girl had loosened after hearing that they are from the same high school and year as her brother, and was relieved that they were, for now, harmless computer lovers.

“My bad, sorry. From far, it only looked like you two were forcefully trying to pick her up and she was troubled by it.” (Azuma)

“Sorry. It looked like an acquaintance of mine was troubled, so I just...”
(Nukumi)

Azuma and Nukumi lower their head and apologize.

“I-It is okay. As long as you get it.” (Amano)

“W-We don’t mind.” (Koga)

Maybe because they are not used to speaking with girls, the two were stuttering in a way unusual of them, but they accept the apology.

“What. A misunderstanding huh. Then, take this as a sign of apology.”
(Haruko)

Haruko holds something and gives it to the two.

“...****Roll?”

“...White****.”

“Wrong. It is for use as *obligation chocolate in valentine*. You can just return twice as much in white day. I will wait without expectation.” (Haruko) <I literally have no idea what the censored parts are.>

“W-What a way of putting it.” (Amano)

“Thanks.” (Koga)

Amano had a different reaction, in contrast to Koga who received it sincerely.

“Amano is not sincere. Even though you are happy about it~.” (Haruko)

“Put a -senpai on it, Paparazzi!” (Amano)

“You get a chocolate and that’s what I get?!” (Haruko)

“You pushed it on me, there’s nothing to be happy about!!” (Amano)

“Hah...Hah... Talking all big when you didn’t get any obligation or friend chocolates. Do you think I don’t know at least that much?” (Haruko)

“Hah...Hah... Your made-up articles only bring you viruses in return, so you are now spreading chocolates instead?” (Amano)

“...”

“...”

“T-That virus was your doing?!!! You are the WORST!!!” (Haruko)

“I did get some. You know, one or two at least!!” (Amano)

Amano and Haruko were strangely getting heated up in their discussion, no, they were already jumping right onto bickering.

“U-Uhm...” (Mari)

“Mari-chan, this is the kind of thing that you should just leave alone. There’s probably a sad past or a lot of just-desserts in it, so let’s just let them do as they want.” (Azuma)

“Yuriko-senpai. I see, is that so.” (Mari)

“Anyways, Koga-kun, do you think the computer of Makoto can be repaired?” (Azuma)

“A-Ah. I don’t know unless I actually see it, but I don’t think it is because of external reasons, so I think it will be okay if you give me a bit of time with it.” (Koga)

“Really, Koga-senpai?!” (Mari)

“Senpai...Senpai...Koga-senpai... I didn’t bring a recorder with me. Might as well die...” (Koga)

“Koga-senpai?” (Mari)

“Oh, that’s impressive. I have a slightly better impression of you now. I ask this of you as well for the sake of my cute Kouhai.” (Azuma)

“I-I also ask this of you. Please repair the computer.” (Nukumi)

“Everyone... Thank you very much.” (Mari)

“T-Then, c-can I get your contact information? If you tell me a day that’s convenient for you, I will go and check it out.” (Koga)

“Ah, in that case, if you have some time, can you please come today to check it out? Since it is already this time of the day, how about having lunch in my

house?" (Mari)

"?!?!?!?!?!"

The unexpected -no, the proposal that he has not received in a lifetime had made the thoughts of Koga short-circuit.

"In that case, we should stop that side. It would be better if Amano-kun were to go as well, right?" (Azuma)

"No, he doesn't have to be there. Or more like, don't come." (Koga)

His dark true feelings were overflowing.

It might have been words that came out instinctively.

"Eh?"

"No, it is nothing." (Koga)

"The heat must have passed its peak already, and if we were to leave them going, it would be an embarrassment to high schoolers. We will bring Yanase-san back, so I leave Amano-kun and Mari-chan in your care, Koga-kun." (Azuma)

"W-W-What?" (Koga)

Azuma slowly closes in on Koga, making him freeze.

"If you properly repair it, I will thank you. But...if you do anything weird to Mari-chan...I will be thanking you in another way, got it?" (Azuma)

The whisper that Azuma added stealthily after was low, and made Koga tremble.

After stopping the dispute of Amano and Haruko, Azuma and the others bid farewell to Koga and Amano who will now be heading to Mari's house as they all left the shopping district respectively.

Evening.

At the way back from the Misumi household, two boys -Amano and Koga- were walking in a dreamlike state.

Leaving aside whether the computer is okay or not, they had checked out the

computer of Makoto, received a warm reception, and passed a splendid time that they were sure they would melt if they were to stay longer.

The Misumi household, counting the older sister Yukiko and the parents, were basically the ideal home for those two.

We may be digressing here but, aside from his taste in Milfs, Amano had now awakened to elder sisters.

The father, Hayato, had sent them a good amount of death glares at them, but the two were so in joy that they didn't notice and were single-mindedly in bliss.

"It is incredible. The Misumi household is incredible." (Amano)

"Mari-tan. Next year, Mari-tan will be in the same high school..." (Koga)

It was a lost case.

The two of them were a completely lost case.

That's how it felt until they were hit by a cold wind that would stop one's breath.

"Hah... At any rate, it was like a dream." (Amano)

"Yeah, but it worried me a bit." (Koga)

"You talking about Makoto's computer?" (Amano)

"I thought that it might be a problem with the parts, but the HDD itself was gone. Is that even possible?" (Koga)

"Wanna try investigating Makoto a bit more?" (Amano)

"Will you help? We have to confirm the safety of my brother-in-law after all."
(Koga)

"?!"

"Have to diet as well. I am graduating from being a pizza fatty." (Koga)

"...Looks like you are still dreaming. I as well, if only Yukiko-san didn't have a boyfriend... I would be totally okay with the wife being a widow as well."
(Amano)

“...You are at a worse path than I am. Don’t go dreaming.” (Koga)

“Not on the level of you who gave away the SSD. Is that okay? The 320Gb SSD.” (Amano)

“No regrets.” (Koga)

“Really? What about Raid Zero?” (Amano)

“...I am not regretting anything. Definitely not. Accompany me in running from tomorrow on.” (Koga)

“From tomorrow on, you say. Don’t go on the ‘tomorrow’ excuse right from the get-go.” (Amano)

It was as if they were having a dispute, but it felt as if they were having fun.

The two friends of Makoto continue their conversation within the dusk.

Makoto’s wish of ‘disposing of my computer’ was not possible, but the saving grace was that it was possible to physically take away the hard-disk and, just in case, clean up the whole storage. Tsukuyomi was unexpectedly tech-savvy.

He was being of help to Makoto even in unexpected areas.

Extra Story XXII - Around that time..... 4

Susanoo was irritated.

Of course he would be.

He went through the trouble of going to an inferior world and had an official appointment with the Goddess there, and yet, he had been slipperily avoided.

If there weren't two Gods with him, he might have rampaged.

It is because this is a request from none other than his brother Tsukuyomi that he is barely able to maintain his composure.

"How about you calm down a bit? Here, how about you keep company to another God?"

"Daikoku, doesn't it piss you off? Why should we be made to wait in this way for a little brat like her?" (Susanoo)

"A child that is desperately trying to hide what they did from their parents. There's no choice but to think of it in this way as we wait." (Daikokuten)

The old man was sitting in front of a go board, that who knows where he brought it out from, and was playing with the black stones.

That old man is Daikokuten, a powerful God.

It may be hard to believe, but his rampaging in the past was a lot worse than that of Susanoo.

"Athena, what do you think?" (Susanoo)

"She should know that the longer we are made to wait, the worse it will be for her. I think she is a stupid child." (Athena)

"I-I see." (Susanoo)

A serious tone, that didn't show a single sign of joking, came from the young woman that was sitting in a dazzlingly beautiful posture as she responded to Susanoo with only her face facing him.

Athena.

This woman, that would mostly be drawn armed, obviously has the personality of a God of War.

Her divinity and strength is lower compared to that of Daikokuten and Susanoo, but the words of hers ‘it will be worse for her’ were as serious as they could be, and it made Susanoo, who threw the conversation to her, draw a cold sweat.

Her stories are not short in cruelty, and that made the smile in her beautiful face look even scarier.

“Her servants go ‘please wait, please wait’, like robots. Can’t just go hitting them, so only my anger accumulates.” (Susanoo)

“Hoho~, looks like you are still a young’un~.” (Daikokuten)

“Then, how about you search for someone that matches wavelengths? Susanoo-dono.” (Athena)

Athena proposes this to Susanoo.

“Wavelengths? Ah, you mean watching the world of that Goddess through their eyes huh. I see, so you were killing time by doing that, Athena.” (Susanoo)

Susanoo points out what Athena has been doing while she was silently sitting looking as if

she was passing her time doing nothing.

“Yeah. I don’t like boredom that much either after all. I found someone who matched my wavelengths, so I have been looking at the world and the boy in question.” (Athena)

“W-What?! A-Are you talking about Misumi Makoto?!?” (Susanoo)

“Yes. Luckily, I had a good match with a person that’s close to him, so I have been enjoying observing him from her eyes. I was surprised. To think that I would be able to see the boy Makoto while watching her world. At first, I didn’t feel much culture, so I thought I had missed somewhere though.” (Athena)

“What a lucky one you are. So the ones that live uprightly everyday have such advantages huh...” (Susanoo)

“What, is it about Makoto? I heard that that boy had made a lake.”

(Daikokuten)

“Yeah, he is an interesting boy. Moreover, he himself hasn’t noticed that yet. And that dragon named Shen, she also has pretty good skill.” (Athena)

Daikokuten had joined into the conversation of Athena and Susanoo. Moreover, it seemed like he was aware of the recent state of the boy of interest, Misumi Makoto.

Susanoo felt a sense of estrangement when seeing his companions that were enjoying their talk.

When Athena was praising the ‘skills’ of Shen -the follower of Makoto, Tomoe-, she didn’t mean her strength in battle, which was something Susanoo was able to pick up from her tone even when he doesn’t know the details of it.

He made a frown.

“W-Wait a moment. Why does even old man Daikoku know?!” (Susanoo)

“That’s cause I was also able to tag along on the person that had a good wavelength with Athena. She is a girl that serves well as a medium.”

(Daikokuten)

“Is this bullying? Is this a new type of bullying?” (Susanoo)

“It was truly a coincidence, wasn’t it, Daikokuten-sama?” (Athena)

“Ain’t that right.” (Daikokuten)

“Kugh~, I can’t accept it! I can’t accept it, but this is the best way to kill time. I will at least admit that. Okay. Tell me who that girl medium is! I want to look at Makoto as well before that idiot comes!” (Susanoo)

“Can’t be helped. But it is not granted that your wavelengths will match hers, so at least take that into consideration.” (Athena)

“I get it, I get it so...!” (Susanoo)

“Then, it is this girl.” (Athena)

“Hm, a human -no, a hyuman...wait, it is not. Looks like an elf?” (Susanoo)

“Yeah.” (Daikokuten)

“Right. They are apparently called Forest Onis there.” (Athena)

“Then, it is that little one huh. If a destruction God with no reservation like the old man Daikoku can do it, then there’s no way I can’t. Right, the wavelength. Oh, it is true that this girl has a wide reception area. Uoh, what?!” (Susanoo)

“...Looks like you can’t.” (Athena)

“Good grief. You are an unlucky one. Did you get infected by the misfortune of Makoto?” (Daikokuten)

“Impossible! There’s no way that would be possible. I have not seen him yet, so there’s no way! Why, why can’t I look?! Nuaaaaaa! Now that it has come to this, anyone is fine! Athena, tell me everyone that has a chance to see Makoto! There should be someone that can match me!!” (Susanoo)

Looks like Susanoo was not a match for the Forest Oni girl that Daikokuten and Athena had matched to.

He was actually going through all the related people and searching for one that matches him.

“That girl had quite the potential though... It is amusing to teach her a variety of things, and seeing the boy Makoto get scared by this is also fun. Fufu, Eris, you can hear me, right? Listen well, today I will be teaching you about the holy fighters that surpass the laws of cause and effect, the magical girls. This is a reward for working well for that boy.” (Athena)

Athena ignored that hard struggle of Susanoo and sends a message to Eris in her dreams.

If it is towards a person that has high compatibility with the God, it is possible to do something like this even if the God is not related to that of dreams.

The Forest Oni that has mysterious wavelengths, Eris.

For some reason, she is an outstanding talent that is able to accept the wavelengths of the Gods that come from the origin world.

She can hear the words of Gods of other worlds.

This could be said to be an extraordinary ability for a priest.

Being able to hear the voice of Spirits, being able to speak with the Goddess no matter the place; it is not such a cheap ability like that.

To describe how amazing this is, it is so amazing that it is pitiful that no one understands it and treat her as a pitiful girl.

Unfortunately, because Eris is not hyuman, her wavelengths don't match those of this world's Goddess, so there would not be a time where she will awaken as a priest and will stay as a special cookie, but at any rate, she is amazing.

The modern era knowledge of Athena that is being transmitted to Eris will continue causing headaches to Makoto in the future.

"Hoh~. Athena, so this time you are going for anime huh. In that case, let's see... let's teach her a bit of kanji. Study time. At any rate, with him searching for matching wavelengths, we will be having a bit of peace... Even so, this is one troublesome Goddess." (Daikokuten)

Looking at the two young Gods with him, Daikokuten showed a tired face.

It looks like he is planning to watch Makoto and teach Eris, but without any intentions of continuing the conversation with Athena and Susanoo, he turned his back and returned to the go board.

But...

In an instant, that expression of his turned into that of anger, and there was even killing intent in it.

"If you bring in humans from the Origin World, that world will face a chaos in its probabilities and will create parallel worlds in an explosive manner. Humans are probability monsters after all. The destruction of the infinitely branching parallel worlds...is not the job of a God of Creation that's still wet behind their ears. It is the job of a God of Destruction." (Daikokuten)

Clack, Daikokuten places a stone on the go board.

The placed stone seemed to be trembling, and after creating a small crack in the place it was put on, it stopped.

This pointed at the destruction of one parallel world.

This is the action of destroying the future of a diverged world and converging it to the actual future of the world that was originally there.

This was an incredibly high level technique of a God of Destruction.

“To think I would be made to destroy the parallel worlds in this way... I can’t just pardon it as being a pain. It is the norm to have a God of Destruction dispatched after the required report, and yet, she didn’t even do the reporting. What a fool. To think I would be doing my old job when tagging along with Susanoo to this world.” (Daikokuten)

His narrow eyes raise slightly and a sharp glint shows.

“The two human heroes widen the probabilities and make the future of the original world uncertain. Will Makoto become the wedge? If he can’t become the wedge...there might be the need for a bit of a rough treatment.”
(Daikokuten)

Every time Daikokuten places a black stone, the same phenomenon occurs, and the small noises continue.

Susanoo and Athena didn’t notice.

Not even the Goddess herself knows that Daikokuten is helping her out in dealing with the parallel worlds that are being rampantly created.

The source of this are the humans. In other words, Otonashi Hibiki and Iwahashi Tomoki.

The ‘wedge’ that Daikokuten spoke of while he was placing go stones, the details of it didn’t come out of his mouth even through the end.

The three Gods pass their time in their own way while waiting to meet with the Goddess that was still not there.

“...There’s no superior guy in this shitty world that would be able to match wavelengths with me. Yeah, that’s right. The next time a servant comes here saying ‘please wait a bit more’, I will be forcing my way! I am already at the limits of my patience! Come quickly! Come quickly and say ‘please wait a bit more’! Raaaaah!!” (Susanoo)

It didn’t take long for Susanoo’s cry of suffering to turn into rampaging roars

of anger.

Extra Story XXIII - A certain day at the sea

This may be abrupt, but right now, the port towns are searing.

Ah, excuse me. I am a scholar.

Well, I say scholar, but I am not in the popular areas like magic language, theology, or the art of war.

My research theme is the development of settlements and their conditions.

Putting it bluntly, it is a subject that's plain and no one even bothers paying attention to.

But as a person who only eats away the inheritance left by my parents, those kind of things doesn't matter to me.

The condition of the towns that are close to the sea have become better recently, and that growth was dazzling.

I personally prefer places with abundant green like rivers and lakes, so I am not that specialized in the sea, but it is not outside my range of research.

I went there to collect data.

It looks like the heat created by this small fishing village, Koran, in Aion Kingdom, situated slightly at the north of Tsige, had begun to infect the other port towns that were at its coast as well, and it was connecting to the continuous growth cycle of the towns.

In the first place, the sea is untrodden land.

There's people who leave a bit into the open sea to fish or go through the coast to cross to other settlements, but there's mostly no one who would actually go out into the open sea.

The people that live at the coastlands are naturally poor and live their everyday life through the blessings of the sea.

Excluding the cases when the country provides assistance, there's practically

no cases where those kind of settlements grow into big ports.

But now...the situation was clearly changing.

There seems to be two reasons for this.

After being purely interested in how this came by, I had finally pinpointed these reasons.

I am thinking about doing some interviewing.

All the information came from the testimony of a fisherman. I still haven't been able to sort out a part of that information, so it might be a bit of a clutter, but don't mind it.

— Fisherman POV —

So...the first one is a woman wearing a kimono whose characteristic trait is her glossy black hair. The other one is a slender man that has long deep red hair and looks like a scholar.

Hm, he didn't give the feeling of being a nervous person like you. If I had to describe them, they would be more like calm nobles free of wordly care.

Well, their skin was pure white compared to ours, and it felt as if they hadn't done fishing at all.

It goes without saying but, I am speaking of Mio and Shiki from the Kuzunoha Company. (Scholar: What peculiar names. Must note it down for the future.)

At first, the two of them apparently came to the fishing village for ingredients.

Mio's objective was fish that can be used for sashimi, and Shiki's objective was white-flesh fish that can go well with nabe that has dashi as base.

Ah, you, do you know about dashi?

It is apparently being used in this town recently, but that's truly a piece of work.

I really felt sorry that we were treating it as trash before and throwing it away.

'It is a soup that you can make from seaweed. There's plenty worth in having a taste of it, you know?', is what was advertised to me.

If I remember correctly, this is a story of when Mio and Shiki had come to the town.

No matter what port town they went to, the goods there were all poor to the extreme. (Scholar: It is not as if the things that can be caught from the sea are bountiful in variety anyways. I don't know what they compared it to to reach that conclusion.)

But even with that, the two of them got the ingredients they could to achieve the minimum for their cooking, and left obediently.

That was truly the calm before the storm.

First, Mio was unable to endure the lack of ingredients and jumped onto a boat that was about to leave for fishing —no, it might have been too small to even call it a boat.

At that time, there were no big boats that could take a large amount of people for fishing. The fishers were all using small boats.

There's no need for a big boat for things like fishing rods and freediving after all.

Mio got catch one after the other.

But of course, there was a limit to how much the boat could carry. Moreover, even when wrapped up, they couldn't move forward properly with the weight.

Well, it was a small boat, so it is not as if they were that far into the sea though.

You ask if it is even possible to catch so many that you can't even put them all on the boat?

Oh well, she apparently was able to achieve that, so let's leave it at that.

In the next day, Mio had brought demi-humans to the port town that seemed to be dwarfs.

Mio used Shiki and those guys as well as the local shipwrights to enlarge the boats and improve them.

The standing of Mio was clearly higher.

Looking at men of the sea being scolded by a woman isn't that nice of a thing.

But, that person is different.

I can't raise my head to my mother, so I can understand how it must have felt.

In the first place, she could catch more fish than anyone could and cook up delicious food that no one has heard of before.

There's no way to complain.

In no time, the prototype of a large boat that can take several people on board was born.

It is made to be operated by many people, and the size itself is one size smaller than that of an actual passenger ship, but this was on a whole different level from the boats until now.

Of course, with a great boat, the amount we fishermen can catch increases.

The manufacturing technique was originally there already since it is a port town. That's why the amount of work in the town increased and the preserved food of the stores increased a lot as well.

It might have been at this time where the separation of fishing for the sake of living and the fishing for the sake of gaining money had surfaced.

It started being possible to ship processed fish and fish preserved with magic.

However, at the same time, the damage caused by pirates began to increase even though it wasn't that high in the past.

If money moves, the thieves move as well.

In a sense, this is something that can't be helped.

They were probably ruffians that have experience in fishing, or idiots that thought it was faster to steal rather than properly fishing.

Normally, this would be a wall for the places that develop into going to the far ocean.

But we had Mio. Ah, and Shiki as well.

The thieves easily became trash of the ocean before they turned into a threat,

to the point that it was pitiful.

The spells and arrows were eaten by an unknown darkness before it could reach the ship.

By the time we noticed, the other party's ship would be split in two. And sometimes, a big round hole would be made on their ship.

If I were a thief and I saw Mio, I would turn back no matter if there's a storm going at the rear.

The fleets fishing at the places where these people are was profitable to the point that Spirit statues or female carvings couldn't compare.

After that, Mio continued embarking on the fishing trips, favorably found new catch, and pulled out a lot of new types of marine products.

It was profitable to a level where it felt as if they were fishing out money from the ocean.

Shiki?

At first, he boarded together with Mio, but he got seasick to a pitiful level.

Hm, you ask why he was able to make an excellent ship when he has such a disposition?

Who knows. It hasn't been told to anyone, and I don't know either.

It is probably because the demi-humans that they brought -I think they are most likely dwarfs-had special techniques.

Dwarfs normally live at mines or volcanoes, is what I remember hearing from my grandpa before, but I wonder if they can even make boats?

You are a scholar, right? Don't you know about them?

It is outside your expertise huh.

We also have catches we are good at and catches we are not good with, so it might be similar in that sense.

At any rate, there's a story regarding Shiki.

It is a famous story about him conquering his seasickness in an incredible way.

You could probably hear about it around the area as a funny story.

Well, it is not a joke, but the truth though.

That was when Mio had gone out fishing and was unable to catch the fish she was aiming for.

The two apparently got in a quarrel.

At that time, this is what Mio told to Shiki.

“You can’t even ride a boat properly because you get sick, and yet, it looks like your lecturing seems to be free of ailments-desu wa ne. In that case, how about you go fishing as well and use that good head of yours to catch fish?” (Mio)

“No, Mio-dono. That’s not what I meant. What I am saying is that instead of fishing one by one, it would be more efficient to cast a net and catch many at —” (Shiki)

“Isn’t that something you get to say only when you actually go out to the open sea?” (Mio)

“Hngh...” (Shiki)

It looks like Mio’s position inside the company was higher than his, though Shiki was also in a pretty high position himself.

In the end, Shiki didn’t say much back and left it to Mio —or at least that’s what it looked like.

Shiki must have had his pride as a man somewhere in there.

After several days, Shiki boarded a boat with his robe fluttering.

He was standing composed at the bow of the boat that was going parallel to the one of Mio.

That face of his showed not a single sign of him feeling sick.

You are asking me if there’s a way to cure seasickness disposition in a few days?

Listen till the end.

Shiki looked at Mio with a self-satisfied face. And then, he said this.

"If you can't take the shaking, you just have to float. Mio-dono, I will show you the utility of nets in the open sea." (Shiki)

Isn't that incredible?

With that unknown plan, he went through the trouble of riding a boat and was floating at the deck at all times. That's how he conquered his seasickness. (Scholar: Floating. But in order to keep that going, there would be the need for abnormal amounts of magic power. Let's just leave this as unknown whether this is actually true.)

I wanted to retort that 'there's no need for a boat anymore if you do that'. That's how abnormal that feat was.

Huh?

Forging?

You think I am forging the story?

Gahahaha.

I understand how you feel.

But you see, what I have told you now is all something I experienced with these eyes and ears.

They are without doubt true.

Shiki had without doubt been floating all the time we were in the middle of the sea.

Or rather, I have been skipping a lot of parts, so it sounds like a lenient story, you know?

Do you know about Duke Swordfishes?

How about Armored Tunas?

The Flavorshot Ascidians?

Club Big Bodies?

Robust Thirteen, Clam Army, Explosive Urchins... (Scholar: Must investigate this later. From how he speaks, they must have strength comparable to that of

mamonos.)

You don't know, right?

If you feel like investigating about them later or seeing them, I can teach you what I know.

You ask if there's pirates at present?

At the very least, there's none around our area.

You haven't seen ships that have faced damage lately, right?

Yeah, that's a given.

They understand that this is too much for them after all.

Most pirates have already changed their profession to fishers, you know?

Remaining?

The remaining ones are already stars in the starry night. At the bottom of the ocean, that is.

As a result, we are now able to send fish to the market that has grown to a point we wouldn't have believed before.

Guys wanting to go out to search for unseen lands and islands have begun to appear lately.

New fishing grounds are being steadily found.

Our town is heated up to an incredible extent.

Can you believe it?

The source of this heat was from a woman that was looking to eat delicious fish. And a man pursuing white-fleshed fish to go with his nabe in cold seasons served as propelling power.

There are times when I am wondering whether I am dreaming and hit my cheeks every now and then.

But the other port towns are also showing their own growth, and their shipbuilding technique is also developing. (Scholar: It is true that the ships being made are remarkably improving. Koran is a step higher than the rest, but maybe

it is because these guys were the first.)

This is without doubt reality.

The fishing settlements were mostly poor ones, but that's in the past.

We are now at our peak heat.

No doubt about it.

We can't raise our heads to those two —no, we are truly grateful to the Kuzunoha Company.

If it is the request of those guys, no matter the fisherman, they would lend their ship for free.

Whenever something new comes up or something strange happens, we would report it all to them -even if they don't ask.

An employee of the Kuzunoha Company would always come every several days, so at those times, we do our best to receive them.

Just that, there's something that pains us greatly.

Mio and Shiki told us that we are not their subordinates, so there's no need to call them with honorifics.

I can talk like this to others, but when I am in front of the people themselves, I just can't do it.

I end up feeling the need to call them Aniki and Anego. <Bro and Sis.>

Also, I thought that eating this so called Sashimi that is fish fillets was not possible, but this was unexpectedly good.

I don't remember the name, but when you pour this black-like sauce on it, it is good!

It is strong in its saltiness, but it is slightly different from salt.

...Ah, no good, to think I would forget the name.

There's also this salmon that you put thin yellow syrup to it. This also gives a nice simple taste to the fish that's different to that of sauce.

This seems to also work for deep-fried food.

They can be used for a variety of things.

In my life at the sea, I didn't expect people from the outside to be teaching us how to eat delicious fish.

We buy both seasonings from the Kuzunoha Company, but it is also popular as a product in the town.

They also taught us a lot of things about seasoning Nabe, from things we already know and things we don't.

They are truly a mysterious bunch.

With the fishing that utilizes a tough net, which Shiki proposed, we managed to catch things we had never seen before like big shrimps and crabs, and also shellfish.

Bake them, boil them, steam them; they go well with any of those and there's no lack of people willing to trade for high prices.

At around this time and at free days, there have been people that go to the beach to setup grill stores.

Grilling them on an iron plate is also delicious. Most of all, that smell, it is plain irresistible.

Things like shrimps and crabs are damn aromatic. And that goes the same for the slightly big shellfishes that give out a smell as if enveloping you.

Ah, I remember now, the black sauce.

If I remember correctly, they called it soy sauce. This also gives out a peculiar smell when it is heated, ya know. (Scholar: Seriously, there's a lot of these kind of talks. But the seafood of Koran is indeed a delicacy. At the times I came here, I would order a nabe even when it wasn't winter.)

...Aah, after talking about it, I feel like having some sashimi.

You ask why we don't grill that one too? Don't mind the small stuff!

It is right about time.

How about hearing the continuation at my recommended place on your treat?

You want to hear more of the grand tales of Mio and Shiki, right?

The price huh.

You must be worried about the 'high price' I mentioned before, right?

It is true that, lately, there have been famous cooks coming to the ports, and there have been high prices placed.

But this is my home area, you know?

There's a great place to taste the bounties of the sea at a cheap price, and it is delicious to top it off.

Mio and Shiki have left a good amount of recipes, so this should be a great chance for ya as well, don't you think?

That's what I like to hear!

You won't regret it.

Now that it has been decided, let's go at once.

— Scholar POV —

After the talk with the fisherman, I ended up drinking with him until late. It is true that it was delicious.

I thought that the marine type food was inferior to that of meat, but it might have been foolish prejudice.

It is true that there were no few things that didn't match my palate, but there were a good amount that made me think it would be nice to live in a settlement close to the sea.

But, the Kuzunoha Company...

It is a name I don't hear often.

Even so, it is true that when I went around the port towns, I would for sure hear the name of this company.

The rapid growth of the port towns seems to be through the help of them - especially the people called Mio and Shiki.

But it doesn't seem like they are grasping any special amount of benefits from

it.

They do trade a number of products, but it is not something on the level of monopolizing it.

It doesn't seem like they are bothered about the rise of other companies, and conflicts have not occurred.

What is their objective?

Their front is apparently that they are studying the seafood cooking, but there's no way that's all there is to it.

Truly unnerving.

I will be recording the port towns that will continue growing, and while at it, I hope of learning more about them.

Now that I think about it, there was an uproar at Rotsgard.

I am estranged in the ways of the world, so I don't know the details of it, but I have heard that the head office of the Kuzunoha Company is there.

It might be good to just go and ask.

I wonder if the representative Raidou can have a talk with me.

Extra Story XXIV - At that time in the mountains (at Asora)

The wind swayed the leaves in the surroundings and created a lush sound at the same time.

A good and nostalgic memory resurfaces in my mind.

A terrible memory also surfaced at the same time.

It is a strange feeling that offsets each other.

No, apparently the painful memories are the ones that remain the stronger, so if I had to choose which, I would say it leaves more of a bad aftertaste than a good one.

Today, we were with a pretty big amount of company at a certain place in Asora.

The ones accompanying me are Tomoe, Mio, and Shiki; there's also Orcs and Arkes, making it several tens of people.

Being in the face of such a unique scene, I take a deep breath. Even when counting that it is morning, a cold air enters my body.

Now then...

“It is quite the splendid thing, isn’t it. It has appeal.” (Tomoe)

“Is there ingredients in a place like this?” (Mio)

“Fumu... I think I have seen something similar to that in Lorel and Aion, but I feel like it was a lot thinner than this. The feeling of the leaves is similar, but I remember it not being this thick.” (Shiki)

The Orcs were restless, but my three followers were also showing interest as they look around.

That Shiki is saying he has seen something similar.

When he says the leaves are similar but it is not a tree, does he mean bamboo

grass? If I remember correctly, it can also be considered as himetake.

Maybe in this world, they are called bamboo shoots as well.

That's right, we are currently at a bamboo thicket.

More precisely speaking, a bamboo grove we are planning on making a bamboo thicket.

This part is pretty important.

I have gone to this kind of place a number of times when I was in Japan. It was apparently a place that didn't lose to the one at Sagano in Kyoto.

But this is something the people there told me.

.....In the first place, I have not been to that Sagano place, so I wouldn't be able to tell.

Since we were going to a bamboo grove, I honestly asked my Sensei, who brought me there, what we would be doing at that place.

When I asked, Sensei made an 'ah' face.

Right after, my shoulders were firmly grabbed and, when I turned around, I saw a middle-aged man making a scary face.

It might be because of these kind of experiences that I was slowly able to tell the scary smiles and the non-scary smiles when interacting with Sensei.

And so, he told me that the place was a bamboo thicket. That it was by no means a bamboo grove. That it was a bamboo thicket he placed his all in growing.

He was deluding himself. That was no thicket.

.....The bow training that was supposed to be done in a flat bamboo thicket, was now changed into a training at a bamboo grove with slanted surfaces like those of slopes.

It was hell.

Rather than the tastiness of the bamboo shoots, the part of my whole body being in pain remained more vividly in my mind.

Well, that has nothing to do with what's happening now though.

It simply reminded me of this.

Today, we came to this place that grew at quite the high speed to begin managing it.

They grow fast, so they seem to have gotten even more special in Asora.

Mio seems to only be interested in the bamboo shoots though.

“But this is a troublesome wideness. There’s already the point that the bamboos are growing fast, so...first, we have to stop them from expanding even more.” (Makoto)

“They are tall, strong, and numerous. Can’t we use them for something?”
(Tomoe)

“The inside is hollow depending on the area. You can shave it or knit it to make it into daily goods.” (Makoto)

“That’s interesting. Let’s cut a number of them and bring them back.”
(Tomoe)

I also speak about the bamboo shoots.

“The thing that Mio is currently poking is a bamboo shoot that can serve as an ingredient.” (Makoto)

“Ah, no, it wasn’t as if... I just thought it had a strange shape and... Eh? This is an ingredient? It is called bamboo shoot?” (Mio)

“It may look like that, but it is quite the all-purpose good, you know. Let’s dig those out too and taste test them with everyone later.” (Makoto)

“Yes!” (Mio)

I tell Mio the identity of the thing that was covered in a deep light brown skin she was poking with her folded fan.

“Okay! Well then, let’s divide and confirm the size of the bamboo thicket first. Arke, can I ask that of you guys? The Highland Orcs can get rid of the trees that are not bamboos and might end up getting in the way.” (Makoto)

“Then, I will be investigating this plant first. Waka-sama, do you know

something of it?" (Shiki)

"Shiki, the bamboo shoots spread underground. Also, there's genders, and the female is stronger, so when managing them, you can thin out the male ones...apparently. I honestly only have superficial knowledge of it, so I don't know any of the detailed stuff. I did get taught about a variety of ways to eat bamboo shoots though." (Makoto)

"Underground type huh. In that case, it might be useful in a variety of things. Currently, there's problematic sides to it, but in terms of depth...oh? It is pretty shallow. I see." (Shiki)

Shiki began to analyze the bamboo itself.

Shiki had completely become an agricultural person in Asora. He can even do research. The type you would want at least one in every household.

I can't tell the difference between a male and female, and in the past, I dug the bamboo shoots out without caring about those kind of things.

Sorry for my lack of knowledge.

I could still remember the bitter memory of constantly trembling from head to feet because of being exploited.

"Waka-sama, since this light brown thing is apparently an ingredient, would it be better to avoid them as we work?" (Orc)

"Prioritize the work. Even if you were to step on them or crush them, it cannot be helped. They will probably be growing one after the other, so you don't have to mind it." (Makoto)

"I see..." (Orc)

Probably because he didn't want to waste food, the Orc that asked me made a complicated expression.

With how big this place is, I feel like they really will be coming in numbers, so I honestly think that there's no need to worry about it.

In the first place, if we can't eat it all and we don't want them to increase in numbers, we have no choice but to crush them anyways.

“Uhm, Waka-sama? This thing called bamboo shoot, I feel a bit of a problematic characteristic to it.” (Shiki)

“Problematic, you say? Shiki, they don’t have poison, and the bad taste isn’t that hard to get rid of—” (Makoto)

“Uoaaaa?!”

“?!!”

I look at the place where a scream had suddenly rang.

What?

Something that looks like a bamboo shoot had been shot...straight up...at quite the speed. It continues to rise as of now.

The orcs that were in the vicinity of it had jumped out of the way and had fallen on their butts.

...Uhm, seriously, what is happening?

“What happened?” (Makoto)

“W-Waka-sama. The ground suddenly swelled up below my feet and...” (Orc)

“And?” (Makoto)

“Something went up...” (Orc)

“Up...” (Makoto)

That just now was truly a bamboo shoot?

What’s with that strange setup?

Something seems to be falling from where I was looking at.

It took quite a while to come down.

How high up did it fly?

There’s no doubt that what fell was a bamboo shoot.

Because of the fall, the bamboo shoot had been broken to pieces and the yellow edible part of it had been dispersed on the ground.

In other words, it did fly.

A bamboo shoot acting like fireworks?

Hm, this is a mystery.

Everyone's movements stop at this mysterious happening.

"You said that it was below your feet, so that means you stepped on it, right? Then, does that mean it flies when stepped on? A natural landmine?" (Makoto)

"Waka-sama, it looks like they possess a trait that's unknown to you." (Shiki)

"Looks like it. At any rate....Ah, that one should do. Tomoe!" (Makoto)

I find a bamboo shoot poking out and call Tomoe.

"What should I do?" (Tomoe)

"Try pushing the upper part of that one for a bit." (Makoto)

"As you wish." (Tomoe)

Tomoe hits the top of the bamboo shoot lightly with the handle of the katana.

"Oh?"

As if using the action of Tomoe as a signal of sorts, its whole body trembles and flies high up the sky.

Seriously?

"Try with that one next. This time, try cutting it from the side." (Makoto)

"...As you wish." (Tomoe)

Tomoe does as told.

This time, it didn't tremble much and simple rolled on the ground.

Even when we pushed the top, it didn't fly.

How strange.

"Looks like it is fine from the side. Do the underground types all fly when they are pushed with a certain threshold of pressure?" (Tomoe)

"W-Who knows. At any rate, everyone, if you see bamboo shoots, cut them from the side as you go! If you feel something weird at your feet, leave that place at once!" (Makoto)

I give out new orders.

I thought I wouldn't get too tired today, but it looks like it won't be that easy.

In the end, it looks like the cause was with the underground ones.

After my followers, the Arkes, and I had confirmed the size of the bamboo thicket, we decided that we should cut the underground ones and remove the ground to leave it as a moat for now.

When we tried to gather them all with Shiki's magic...the bastards exploded.

That's stupid.

The explosion wasn't that big of a scale, but it exploded to an extent of instinctively stopping the magic.

The troublesomeness raised on a whole other level.

Well, we managed to properly hold back the explosion. And with Shiki, the Arkes, Tomoe, Mio, and obviously me as well, we made a moat as a temporary measure. In other words, everyone but the orcs helped out in it.

It was quite the job.

After that, we entered the moment Mio was waiting for. The gathering of the bamboo shoots.

Since we were somehow on guard and it was something within expectations, we also discovered that when we dig close to the areas where the bamboo shoots are, because of the shock they receive from the side, they fly out as well.

I even thought that we might as well just call the Winged-kin to catch them from above. But it pained me to put them to such useless work, so I kept it as an internal thought.

We decided on collecting them with axes and machetes at a decent depth.

As I thought, there were a lot of bamboo shoots that we simply couldn't collect.

The management of this might be quite troublesome.

At worst, it might be better to just leave it as a bamboo grove.

We just have it not spread any further, and it would be most satisfactory if there were a race somewhere that would like to eat them.

Well, this will depend if the ways of cooking that I know of will be a hit with the other races though.

The Highland Orcs and us transported the bamboo shoots with the skin peeled off, only leaving the edible part.

Transporting it without the skin would make the weight decrease by quite a lot, so this way was better.

“Ah, Ema, you can leave the red part at the bottom like that, just shave it a bit. Next, place water and rice bran in the pot, and put in the bamboo shoot there. That’s right, the big ones, cut them in half. When they have been boiled, lower the fire and let it hang on the fire for a while. And then, after letting them cool down slowly, the preparations are complete.” (Makoto)

“When you do this, what happens?” (Mio)

“If you use the bamboo shoots as they are, there will be bitterness and astringency. By doing this, those strange elements that make it harder to eat will reduce. If they are young ones that have been recently dug out, I heard that you can eat them as they are, but I have not done that before.” (Makoto)

“I see. It takes effort. What kind of cooking is it used for?” (Mio)

“You can cook it with rice, make it juice, make it into steamed wrapping, you can even smear soy sauce to it and eat it just like that as if you were eating sashimi, and you can bake them. At any rate, there’s a lot of ways. We can get quite a lot, so you can go ahead and test them out. But boiling them in water is a basic that is done for all the cooking processes of this, so remember it.” (Makoto)

“Yes. Sashimi of a plant... First time I will try it. Is it different from salad? ...I am looking forward to it!” (Mio)

Mio joins the preparations for the cooking with experienced moves.

I have seen bamboo shoot being baked as it is with its skin on, but I have not

tried it myself.

Introducing a method I don't know about when we are still in the stages of learning about it wouldn't be a good move.

Researching about it on their own later is welcomed, so I pray that it will be to the taste of some race, just like in the time with the Forest Onis and the bananas.

The female Orcs are mostly the ones who do the cooking processing of field products.

When we reach the time for boiling them, I will use the waiting time to introduce them the recipes for it.

Shiki and Tomoe, who had returned to the bamboo grove, will most likely come back here, and if they don't, I can just call them when the cooking is done.

It is going well.

I didn't expect them to fly out.

It reminds me of the story of [princess Kaguya](#).

There was nothing about bamboo rockets in that story, but it was a story about returning to the moon.

I don't know where Asora is located, but there's indeed a moon.

When the sky begins to grow dark, it shows its figure in the sky.

Today it shows itself as well.

Tsukuyomi-sama, are you doing a bit better now?

A bamboo grove and bamboo shoot cooking; in this day that reminds me heavily of my homeland, I was thinking of the God that I met when I came to this world.

The big things in the bamboo grove were left under the supervision of the Orcs.

It is not as if I pushed the job onto them, they volunteered to do so.

Since they have divided the paperwork with the winged-kin, there has been a bit more freedom in their personnel, so it is apparently no problem for them.

But Ema, who was trying to explain it to me in a calm tone, was unable to hide her true feelings.

Looks like they liked it —the bamboo shoots.

My image of Orcs was that of pigs or boars.

The Highland Orcs give a close impression to that of pigs.

I hear often that boars eat bamboo shoots. The Highland Orcs might be the same kind as them even if their appearances are different, so it wouldn't be strange for them to share the same kind of likes.

Now that I think about it, they like chestnuts and potatoes too.

They do eat meat too, but they are people that like vegetables quite a bit.

Even with that, they have those muscles.

Just how does that work.

Hyumans might have unexpectedly bad constitution.

By the way, Asora has pigs and boars. If boars come, I can eat them, but I make sure not to eat pig.

It is because I feel kind of bad for the Orcs after all.

Well, they don't care about reservation or anything like that and eat pig like normal, so it is normally served in the dining table.

But maybe because I don't eat it, Tomoe, Mio, and Shiki also don't eat much of it.

I did tell them not to be reserved about it though. They have their own preferences, so I am not forcing them to eat the things I do.

I don't know how far they have proceeded, but the pigs are still not targets yet for the Gorgons and Winged-kin to domesticate.

I think that the pigs will in time turn back to be boars.

I asked a number of Highland Orcs, and it seems like, it is true that boars and

pigs share a similar appearance to them, but they see them as a completely different race.

From what I have heard, it is similar to how humans perceive monkeys.

...If it were me, I would hesitate in eating monkeys though...

Well, it is fine if they are not against it. It is true that they taste good after all. I will also be eating them in time, so it would be fine to domesticate them in the future.

Stew, ginger fried, twice cooked, pork cutlet, breaded pork on rice, and if it is soup, it would be pork miso soup.

...Yeah, it might be better to not be stubborn about it.

Even with the recipes I know, I am already being tempted.

People like father and Rembrandt-san tell me that I should enjoy the oily food while we are young after all.

Later, after the report, I taught the recipes to Ema who asked me.

I am thinking of lifting my ban on pig meat in a near future.

Leaving aside the outside world, today's day in Asora was quite the peaceful one.

Extra Story XXV - At that time secretly

The place is Asora, where workshops of the Elder Dwarfs line up.

It is a queer division where smithies and furnaces are in place, and within those, there's a single building of conspicuous colour.

It was clearly pretty far from the other workshops, located at the outskirts.

What's abnormal about it? It is really big.

Maybe because the entrance is made for dwarfs, the size of that part isn't that abnormal. But the other entrance, that was closed by shutters, was big enough that one would have to look up.

The back door that's being used for the entry of the materials is also of quite the size.

"We have finally finished the prototype. With this, we will be able to show it to the Chief and Beren."

"We have made it. This concept is not an invention, but a discovery. It is truly fun to see things take form just as theory states."

Inside the place, there's a Dwarf and an Arke looking up at a towering shadow as they nod to each other.

Looks like they are approaching the completion of a work.

Dwarfs and Arkes working together is a rare occurrence even within Asora.

They do share the things they have created with each other, but there's not many times where they would work together for a job.

"Now, it will depend on the reactions of the announcement, but whichever the case, the next step will be decided tomorrow..... I look forward to working with you again." (Dwarf)

"Of course. Don't worry, we even obtained permission to make japanese swords. This is basically the same thing, so the permission will be given." (Arke)

The two look up once more at the shadow that's covered by a veil.

This is something that may cause a revolution, not only in Asora, but in the world.

But well, the two didn't know this though.

That's why the Elder Dwarf and the Arke couldn't understand the meaning of the bitter expression of the Elders, and the official suspension of the research that was ordered by the Lord of Asora, Misumi Makoto.

As craftsmen and as residents of Asora, it was a difficult to accept order-especially for the Dwarf.

They pleaded to the Elders many times, and they also showed the creation to the other craftsmen to gain their agreement.

The two thought that they would be able to gain the agreement of the

warriors of other races in Asora, but their expectations were betrayed and didn't manage to gain much agreement.

As a result, it ended with harsh words that were hard to swallow for the two.

'That's no weapon anymore', this was the common point of the negative opinions.

The two, who were moved by the ground-breaking ideas in Makoto's memories, felt like they were hearing opinions that were old-fashioned.

When they asked: 'If this isn't a weapon, then what is it?', the answer they got back was: 'An armament'.

But the two had given plenty of consideration to methods of using it in peaceful ways.

They were confident that it would be able to leave great results in transportation and public works.

"Why? If this research were to advance, it would become a great strength. Just what is Waka-sama thinking? He shouldn't be someone who wouldn't understand this." (Dwarf)

"He actually looked like he had interest in it. Mio-sama and Tomoe-sama didn't tell us any details about it. They must have some sort of reason for that. He didn't even think of checking it out with his own eyes." (Arke)

"...True. He has personally looked at the prototypes until now, and yet, he didn't even look at this one and rejected it immediately. A reason..." (Dwarf)

"If it is a reason like him losing an important person because of something similar to this in his homeland, it will be difficult to continue research." (Arke)

"Hm, but if it is something like that, they would normally tell us in advance that it is forbidden." (Dwarf)

A dwarf craftsman in his prime, and an Arke that is good in alchemy - especially the creation of Golems; the meeting of these two was due to a part of Makoto's memories that was edited by Tomoe.

The place was where the edited memories of Makoto have been gathered in and is even called as data room.

This room is mainly managed by the followers of Makoto: Tomoe, Mio, and Shiki. However, there are times when the residents of Asora are called for the reason of sorting.

It was at that kind of time that the two, who are originally not tasked with document and report related jobs, had gotten in contact with the memories of Makoto.

They saw it.

A golem that was a lot bigger than the giant race and that humans board to fight.

That was what they saw inside the memories that were scheduled to be erased.

“People...driving Golems...”

“Manned machines...operated directly by people...?!”

The Dwarf sought equipment that doesn't lack behind from the other races; the Arke was in pursuit of the possibilities of Golems.

People operating Golems.

The shock they received from the cliche robot anime was incredible.

The Dwarf saw a supreme piece of equipment there; the Arke felt as if the walls blocking all sides of his thoughts had collapsed, he saw the potential of Golems.

The two polished the structure, and had single-mindedly overcome a difficult path.

And then, they showed it to the Dwarf elders.

A Golem whose overall height is four meters and stands on two feet, and another one that has a lower upper-half body.

The two didn't have anything to be called a head, and there was a seat set up there for the driver to operate it.

Each were respectively boarded by the dwarf and Arke. They used a variety of weapons, and showed quick movements.

In terms of showing its performance, there was no better success than that.

But they couldn't see it as an armament.

No matter the old and young, there were many who showed shirking gazes.

Makoto didn't come to see it. Tomoe and Shiki did come to check it out, but they also didn't show favorable expressions towards the Golems.

"In the first place, what's the difference between a weapon and an armament? I can't tell." (Arke)

"...For us Dwarfs, an armament is referred to as a weapon that is specialized and expected to be used in war. There are times when...you would get exiled for trying to make things like that." (Dwarf)

"No way. What part of this Golem is an armament? It is a more efficient way to expend magic power, many can operate it, and if its abilities are improved, they could be used for surveillance and bodyguarding. There are exceptions, but there's no better assistance to cultivating new land and for construction work." (Arke)

"That's what we thought when we worked on it. Of course, I did think that it could serve as a weapon we could use though..... Right, this is in no means an armament. In that case, there's only one thing to do. Waka-sama's approval." (Dwarf)

"...Showing it to him directly and convince him huh." (Arke)

"No other way. I want to develop these guys even more. If people don't drive them, they will just be dolls. In other words, depending on the user, they can become splendid

tools

. I can't let it end with them being labeled as armament." (Dwarf)

"I will go as well. Now that it has come to this, I will tag along to the ends of it." (Arke)

"Then, let's make a plan. There won't be any point unless we are sure that we can meet with Waka-sama, and there's the chance that if the Elders notice what we plan on doing, it will be crushed before we can do anything." (Dwarf)

“Yeah.” (Arke)

The two began their planning within the big workshop.

It was clear that the two couldn’t give up on the Golems they had created with their own hands.

That stance was something that all craftsmen would understand.

That’s why, the person that was ordered by the Elders to keep them in check stopped watching that figure of theirs.

“Hah... Good grief.”

A man took off the thing that looked like an earphone from his ear and unfastens the big goggles he had on.

“...I understand how you guys feel to the point of being painful. Get the direct approval of Waka-sama. Well, let’s overlook this one. Haha, I might be getting old.” (Beren)

At a place pretty faraway from the workshop, the man, that was the trigger to the Elder Dwarfs migrating to Asora, was having a monologue.

“Also, I don’t hate those kind of ‘mecha’-like things. There’s quite the low chances that Waka-sama will approve of it though. But well, do your best.” (Beren)

Beren looks at the earphones and goggles as he takes a deep sit.

Those two things were articles that he had made himself.

He is also one of the people that took interest in the machines that were in the memories of Makoto.

The direction is different, but he did feel slight kinship towards the two who were burning with passion towards Golems.

“I would have listened to what you guys had to say even without doing something like that, you know.”

“.....”

“.....”

At a later date.

There's a Dwarf and an Arke in Makoto's room.

Their plan of directly negotiating with Makoto had splendidly failed.

The one who prevented it was Mio.

The actions of Mio's kin -the Arkes-were obviously transmitted to her.

It was obvious that he was making suspicious movements, and the fact that the highly intelligent Arke was unable to notice that -no matter how passionate he was with the Golems-is nothing but careless.

It was fortunate for them that they were noticed by Makoto before the questioning (at least that's what she calls it) of Mio began.

The special questionings of hers sometimes would make even Shiki unable to act for a while.

“And so, the reason you two came here was...because of the Golems?”
(Makoto)

They were let into the room of Makoto, and once there were only the three there, the conversation began.

“...Yes. We didn't understand the reason why Waka-sama would stop their development.” (Dwarf)

“This can be considered a recreation of Waka-sama's knowledge just like the Japanese sword. Why was only the development of Golems ordered to be stopped?” (Arke)

The two began to speak with passion about the Golem's advantages as if the gates had opened.

They spoke for several tens of minutes.

The shoulders of the two were heaving as they waited for Makoto's response.

“...I see. You two were thinking of using it as heavy machinery as well huh. I didn't notice that. Sorry.” (Makoto)

When Makoto heard the report of Golems operated by people, he imagined the humanoid armaments that appear in robot anime.

That wasn't incorrect, but that wasn't all there was to it.

They were thinking plenty about ways that could be implemented in Asora, and had considered the Golems to be used like the heavy machineries found in Makoto's world as well.

Hearing the words of Makoto that could be taken as approval, the two suddenly grew more cheerful.

"But the research and development of those Golems...I still can't approve of it." (Makoto)

""?!"

"Because I think that this is excessive power, not only for the outside world, but this Asora as well." (Makoto)

Makoto felt danger even when he heard about the development of small arms, so there's no way he wouldn't feel danger to robots.

With just the combination of magic and science from the knowledge of Makoto's world, it might create a dangerous reaction, is how Makoto thinks.

And in reality, this humanoid armament that doesn't exist in the modern era had been made possible in this world, making his fear even bigger.

"But Waka-sama, you haven't even seen it yet!" (Arke)

"I have heard the report of Tomoe and Shiki." (Makoto)

"If you see the real thing, you will definitely change your mind!" (Dwarf)

"...Why are you two so stuck in manned Golems?" (Makoto)

Instead of answering the request of the craftsmen about seeing the real thing, he questioned them back.

"...Even if we excel at making weapons, we are weak compared to other races. That's why I aimed for strong equipment and placed my hopes in the Golems. But! That was simply my initial motivation. Now, I wish to pursue from the bottom of my heart the many possibilities that the Golems possess! If Waka-

sama says so, I don't mind throwing away the utilization of it as a weapon. Please, give us the approval for research and development!" (Dwarf)

"I loved Golems from the very beginning. But I didn't think about having people operate Golems ever before. The moment I learned of it, I felt appeal in the many possibilities that unfolded, just like he said. Even if it doesn't go in the same direction, I think I won't be able to forget it now that I have learned of it." (Arke)

"I spoke about guns to the Dwarf Elders before. Maybe because of that, the Elders felt like they should stop your research in an early stage. I think that guns and robots are not necessary yet." (Makoto)

"'Yet'? What do you mean by yet? When do you think they will be necessary?" (Arke)

"Right. When the hyumans or demi-humans reach those ideas on their own, I think they will be necessary. At least that's what I think." (Makoto)

"...Then, what about us..." (Dwarf)

"You guys used my memories as the trigger, right? That's no good. I am talking about the time when those kind of things are born at the outside of Asora." (Makoto)

"Something like that...wouldn't it take several centuries?!" (Arke)

"That's why I thought it wasn't necessary and rejected it." (Makoto)

""

The two fall silent.

It is true that if these two hadn't come in contact with the memories of Makoto, they wouldn't have begun the development.

The Dwarf and the Arke were showing bitter expressions as if it was the end of the world.

"Then, b-before they are disposed of, can Waka-sama please look at them at least once? Please, at least that...!" (Arke)

"That's..." (Makoto)

"If! If you are saying you don't want to see our creation even once...!" (Dwarf)

"Stop! If you say anymore than that, I will be putting a stop to this talk. Lower the knife from your neck." (Makoto)

Seeing the Dwarf taking out the knife from his waist and placing it onto his neck, Makoto hurriedly stopped him.

Makoto lets out a sigh when he sees the Dwarf lowering it.

"...It might be the time to properly place restrictions on who can enter that room. Hey, you guys want to continue your research solely for the use of construction and transportation?" (Makoto)

"?!"

"Waka-sama, is that...?!" (Dwarf)

"Do you want to continue? Yes or no?" (Makoto)

"....."

"Will you make sure this technology *definitely* doesn't get outside?" (Makoto)

Nod! Nod!

The two nodded their heads as if they were children.

'Definitely', the word definitely is not one that can be trusted.

Things that exist will, at some point in time, leak to the outside one way or another.

That's how the world works.

Things being kept under wraps rarely happens.

"Then, I will take a look at them once you finish making a construction-use one, so make a change of direction to that path. Well then...I give you my approval." (Makoto)

Even when Makoto knew about this, he still approved of the Golem making of those two.

The desperate passion of those two had gotten to him.

He is soft on his friends.

It is one of his big faults.

““Thank you very much!!””

“Also, in the future, don’t do something stupid as getting caught by Mio. Understood? Well then, you can leave now.” (Makoto)

After seeing the two off, Makoto lets out another heavy sigh.

He was feeling regret, thinking that he shouldn’t have approved it.

“It was the correct choice to not look at it. Even when they will be made into heavy machinery for construction use, I am already looking forward to the finished product. I want to try driving one. Then, even if it is not up to shape, if I were to see a robot, I would definitely want to ride it, and I feel like I would have even accepted the use of it as a weapon. Robots are the dream of everyone after all. You know, like the M, A, K, or the F.” (Makoto) <Most likely Gundams>

The monologue of Makoto echoed powerlessly in his room.

Robots. Makoto liked them enough to watch anime about it.

That’s why he couldn’t go see them.

He couldn’t get fascinated by the things that he should reject.

And in this way, the Asoran humanoid armament development had changed into the development of Asoran heavy machinery for construction.

Thanks to the approval of their Lord, the development advanced, and it would bring about many changes in Asora.

A part of the Gorgons wearing tank tops and becoming heavy machinery meisters, and the creation of giant tools for big machines, are just a few of the many changes.

The giant axe that the young Elder Dwarf used in Rotsgard had been placed as an attachment at the side of the robot, but this was something that Makoto noticed after a good while later.

Extra Story XXVI - At that time, Modern day

“Natsu, I heard you admitted an acquaintance of Makoto.”

“...Information runs fast with you. I wonder where you get that information from. Also, I didn’t admit them, just accepted them as students.” (Natsu)

“What is the difference?”

“Meaning that I only plan on teaching them archery. It is the girls that came to ask about Makoto; high schoolers. They are completely regular citizens, so don’t go thinking anything weird, okay?” (Natsu)

The woman responds to the man that has intruded as usual into her dojo that doubles as her home.

The place is the archery dojo that’s owned by the master of Makoto, Munakata Natsu.

There’s currently no people there, but there’s a decent amount of people that go to learn from her.

For her, admitting someone meant bow techniques and not archery, so it was the trigger for a rebuttal from her.

The man has a muscular physique, and those trained muscles were showing their presence even within his clothes.

Right now he has nothing in hand, but he works as a swordsman —in a peaceful Japan.

It could be said that Ishido Genichi lived in a special world.

“Bummer. And I was looking forward to it.” (Ishido)

“It is a mistake to think that there would be many people to your taste in this Japan. I have told you before but, when Makoto returns, I will reveal your scheme and recommend him to escape.” (Natsu)

“So cold. Then, you are just teaching them normal archery?” (Ishido)

“Of course. They are the friends of my only disciple after all. As long as the people themselves wish for it, I plan on raising them with care without pushing

them into an unnecessary direction. And obviously, I won't allow you to meet them." (Natsu)

"Having one or two old styles wouldn't be bad, you know?" (Ishido)

"I would have considered you meeting them if they at least had the ability for kendo. You are basically a secret path for information. If those girls were to learn that you are connected with Makoto, who knows what kind of dangerous things they will do. That's why, forget about this matter." (Natsu)

"It is true that I can't be a sports instructor..." (Ishido)

"So you do understand." (Natsu)

"...Hey, Natsu, why didn't you...teach Makoto how to use guns?" (Ishido)

Ishido scratches his head as he shows resignation in his face.

But, as if he thought about something, he changed the topic and continued the conversation.

Just by looking, one can tell that Makoto is an archer with special talent. But he is also a person that Natsu acknowledged to the point of making him her disciple and teaching him bow techniques.

Those techniques are a martial art that has little opportunities to shine in daily life, but even so, if she has looked after him through the end as his master, it wouldn't be strange to teach him about the usage of small arms that she herself has polished as well.

"Why did you bring that up so suddenly?" (Natsu)

"Weren't you interested in whether that accuracy could be shown in other things aside from the bow? That's what I am asking. And so, I was wondering if you did or not." (Ishido)

"...I didn't. In the first place, how and where would I manage to have him shoot a gun? Did the battlefield make you senile?" (Natsu)

Natsu looks at Ishido in disbelief and answers with a sigh added in.

On the other hand, Ishido grins while pointing his index finger down.

"The basement of this dojo, if I remember correctly, there's a nice shooting

ground there. And I also know that you own a few quarried places.” (Ishido)

“...Are you a stalker?” (Natsu)

“So? Let’s hear the reason why you didn’t teach him even though you could. You are telling me to not meet Makoto’s friends, so it should be fine to at least tell me this, right?” (Ishido)

“His talent—” (Natsu)

“Don’t come with the ‘he didn’t have the talent’ card. It doesn’t answer the part about your interest in the application of his accuracy.” (Ishido)

“.....”

“Natsu.” (Ishido)

“...I did bring the topic to him once. He is a man, so I thought there’s no way he wouldn’t have an interest in guns.” (Natsu)

After a small silence, Natsu speaks.

“Fumu.” (Ishido)

“But he refused it straight. He clearly refused it saying he didn’t have any interest in it. Pretty unexpected decisiveness coming from that kid.” (Natsu)

“Makoto refusing huh.” (Ishido)

Ishido makes an expression as if saying that’s surprising.

“Yeah. I asked him if he wanted to try out guns since they are long ranged weapons like bows, but even with that, he stood ground. He said: ‘Guns are different from bows. The image of being a weapon for killing is way too strong that I don’t feel like touching them’.” (Natsu)

“...”

“I don’t understand how swords are okay but guns are not though. He said: ‘if there were a gun art, my image of it would be a little different though’, which I didn’t understand.” (Natsu)

“Even though guns have also become a sports in the present. Like the clay pigeon shooting.” (Ishido)

“Yeah. Maybe he is stuck with the part of being a martial art, or it might have been a random reason he gave that can normally be seen from pacifists. In the end, it is still a mystery.” (Natsu)

“You didn’t pursue the topic?” (Ishido)

“Listen here, it was recent that I asked him if he wanted to try using a gun. There’s no way I could ask something like that from a child that’s still in school. Do you think I want to raise a soldier boy or something? In the first place, just as you said, I was simply interested in whether his accuracy translated to guns as well. Just a whim..... I do understand that guns and Japan are not things that can correlate. It is not a skill that warrants forcing him to learn.” (Natsu)

“True.” (Ishido)

“...Now that I think about it, I heard this from two of Makoto’s friends. Have you heard that there was a student in Nakatsuhara high school that went missing at around the same time as Makoto?” (Natsu)

This time, Natsu was the one to change the topic.

“Yeah, I do remember hearing about that. The girl that acted as the student council president, right? I don’t know her name though.” (Ishido)

“Otonashi Hibiki.” (Natsu)

“Hoh. The one who I asked to investigate it told me that it was a matter unrelated to Makoto’s disappearance, so I didn’t pay much attention to it though. So that was her name.” (Ishido)

“Eh?” (Natsu)

“What?” (Ishido)

The two let out dumbfounded voices, and then, silence.

“Old man Gen, we are talking about Otonashi Hibiki here, you know?” (Natsu)

“Yeah, and what?” (Ishido)

“...Hah... She was a disciple of yours!! I have already investigated that, you dumbass!!” (Natsu)

“D-Disciple? Uh... Hmm... Did I have one?” (Ishido)

“You don’t even remember the face of a disciple of yours? She is a third year girl in Nakatsuhara high school, and has this...straight black hair, and the length is about...this long. And well, you see, her family...” (Natsu)

Natsu tells him about Otonashi Hibiki with disbelief.

She didn’t like that, even though she tried bringing out a topic that should make Ishido show a surprised face, he instead made a dumbfounded one.

“Aah!! Now that you mention it, I feel like there was indeed a girl like that that was introduced to me through the acquaintance of an acquaintance! I just remember her dimly, but I see, so it was the girl.” (Ishido)

Dimly wasn’t enough to describe how much he remembered of her.

In the first place, for Ishido who had a shallow connection with her, she was basically only the pupil of a pupil. That’s why when she said disciple, he couldn’t connect the dots.

“What an unbelievable man you are. Seriously, why did you even take an interest in a boy like Makoto that can only use the bow? It is truly a mystery.” (Natsu)

“That guy is out of standard and interesting. He is honest too.” (Ishido)

“Out of standard? What part of him? He couldn’t even cut a straw post properly, right? I heard that all the ones that can become your disciples can, at the very least, cut a straw post in two or one stroke though?” (Natsu)

“Yeah, that’s the minimum. But conversely, Makoto could easily do things that they can’t do, you know? I didn’t tell you last time though.” (Ishido)

There’s the need for quite the technique to cut at a straw post several times in the space of a breath.

One of the minimum requirements of Ishido’s disciples is that they have to be able to swing again right after their initial one, which speaks volumes about how it is not a regular environment.

“Can’t believe that.” (Natsu)

“Hehe, he managed to do the ‘Gogeki’ <合擊> by only seeing it a few times, you know? I don’t know if he is treating his life lightly, but it is not something

one can achieve with just that mindset." (Ishido) <Swinging the sword five times in quick succession>

"....."

Natsu looks at Ishido with a dubious expression.

She was clearly directing eyes of doubt at him.

"Ah right, Natsu, I won't meet them, but at least tell me how the friends of Makoto look. If I remember correctly, they are Hasegawa Nukumi and Azuma Yukari, right?" (Ishido)

"...You know their names already. Why do you want to know their looks as well?" (Natsu)

"No well, if I were to meet them, I would like to be of help. That's all." (Ishido)

"I feel like you would go directly to their school if I don't tell you." (Natsu)

"Yeah." (Ishido)

"Can't be helped. When they came last time, I got a photo of them..... Ah, this one." (Natsu)

Natsu shows a single photo.

In there, there's Natsu and two female students.

"Ooh! That Makoto, he is making such cute girls worry about him? What an envying youth. Give me one. I would like the girl here." (Ishido)

"I will shoot you." (Natsu)

"No, the woman in the middle is the best. She looks like she would be great with guns." (Ishido)

"Do you like anti-material rifles?" (Natsu)

"...Sorry." (Ishido)

"If you are finished with your business, leave already. If you are piled up at that age of yours, just go to a brothel. Seriously, learn from Makoto. It is apparently the standard in the girls of Nakatsuhara's archery club. Even with that, he has been properly sweating in his club activities." (Natsu)

“...Hoh, so this level is normal. Understood. I will leave.” (Ishido)

Ishido moves his bear-like body and stands up from his seat.

“I told you about how they two look. Don’t go to Nakatsuhara high school even by mistake. Understand?” (Natsu)

Natsu felt uneasy, so she pushes it.

“.....My disciple is missing, so I should have a talk with them at least once too.” (Ishido)

“Former

disciple, right? Moreover, you didn’t even remember she existed.” (Natsu)

“You have my gratitude, Natsu. I was about to neglect my duty. I am too worried about Otonashi Hibiki. I must go to Nakatsuhara high school!” (Ishido)

“I retract what I said! Don’t leave! Wait, you degenerate!” (Natsu)

Ishido managed to shake off Natsu and enter his eco-car with navigation that didn’t match his body.

And Natsu who had walked to outside was looking at the back of Ishido’s car that had already ran off.

Her eyes were cooled down as she saw it off.

“Didn’t even need to worry. The idiot is going the opposite direction. He should just crash onto a tree while at it.” (Natsu)

Getting lost in a car that has a navigation system.

She forgot that Ishido had that kind of special ability.

And just as she said, Ishido had arrived at the neighboring countryside.

The archery club Makoto loves had no one involving with it and the day was another peaceful one.

“Good grief. He must be bored as well with Makoto’s absence. Even when it is just Makoto gone, my everyday life feels quite different now. I thought that I had completely gotten used to the surface world...but in reality, it might have simply been that way because Makoto was there. It would be nice if he were to

come back by the time the cherry blossoms bloom." (Natsu)

After that, Munakata Natsu thought about her disciple that had disappeared with no news, and lets out a low mutter.

Extra Story XXVII: Kuzunoha-san ①

Raidou -or Misumi Makoto-, his close aides, and also the demi-humans that are working in the store are using their special abilities and goods in the Kuzunoha Company. This was steadily increasing its reputation.

But there's other people aside from them that hold that name on their back as they do their best.

This is the story of one of them.

“Ah, Kuzu is here!”

“Kuzu-san~!”

Loud voices resonate in the forest.

“Hello.”

The first ones to welcome the man that crossed the gate of the village were the running children.

This place is deep in a forest that's not affiliated to any country.

It is not a village that is close to a forest, but a village that is *in* a forest.

In this village that doesn't receive much visitors, the dark skinned man smiled and returns their greetings as he walks with them following him around.

Even when he is slender, he was carrying big luggage yet wasn't staggering at all as he walked with steady steps.

While he was walking, he greeted the villagers there in good heart and was kind towards the children.

His legs were heading towards a relatively big house, the house of the village chief.

As one can tell by the reactions of the villagers and the childrens, this is not the first time that this man comes here.

He would mostly come once or twice a month.

“Glad to see you here, Kuzunoha Company’s Ririto-sama. My grandfather is waiting.”

A small girl of around ten years old had come to the entrance and receives the man with her head lowered.

The name of the man is Ririto, a Forest Oni. But well, there’s not a single one in this village that knows of the name of that race though.

And he is also a member of the Kuzunoha Company that the otherworlder Misumi Makoto created.

Right now, he has come here under the name of that company.

“Well well, young lady, thank you for the kind reception.” (Ririto)

“I am the future village chief after all. This much is a matter of course.”

“By the way, how did you know I would be coming?” (Ririto)

“That’s because, uhm...just a moment ago...”

“Hey Captain, was my message useful?! Was it useful?!”

Ririto received the greeting of the chief’s daughter that was putting on the airs of an adult, and then questions her in a slightly teasing manner.

It looks like, even though Ririto is a company member from the outside, he is pretty close to her.

The girl was troubled in how to answer, and taking her place, the boy that appeared from the side said something that was close to the answer.

The girl that was called ‘Captain’ was dyed in bright red.

“Ah?! Uwu...”

“Fufu, I see. Ojou-sama is the captain, right. So you received a hasty report from a reliable subordinate.” (Ririto)

“Geez, you idiot! It was supposed to go well!!!”

“Eh?! Why?!”

The messenger boy probably came running full-throttle, his forehead had

sweat flowing down.

He worked so hard, and yet, was called an idiot. He is a bit of an unreciprocated messenger.

His shocked and surprised voice was plenty enough to make people pity him.

“Now then, I will be greeting the chief, so see you later.” (Ririto)

“I am looking forward to the reward for the escort!”

“The store will be in the usual plaza, right?!”

“Okay, let’s go tell everyone in the village!!”

“Wait! I am the captain, you know?! Report about the security of the fields!!”

Ririto entering the house of the chief and the children leaving it happened at almost the same time.

Since the daughter of the chief left, Ririto proceeded inside alone.

“This village really doesn’t change. It is truly cheerful.” (Ririto)

“Thanks.”

The monologue Ririto muttered had a response given back.

It is the chief of this village.

“Chief-san, I was talking to myself there. Long time no see.” (Ririto)

“Don’t worry about it. The only ones who come to a remote village like this are the Kuzunohas. If on top of that you guys like the village, it makes me want to say my thanks.” (Chief)

“Please don’t mind it. We are doing this as a business after all.” (Ririto)

“Without even asking about the circumstances of a village inside a forest, you would always come at least once every month. There’s nothing as grateful as this. There’s no merchant who would regularly go deep inside forests after all.” (Chief)

“I am honored to be of use. I will be borrowing a corner of the plaza, so I came here to give my greetings. Also, I have a matter to talk to you about, so if you can lend me a bit of your time at night...” (Ririto)

"At night huh. Understood. Right, in that case, how about having dinner with us? Or might as well stay the night. I want to consult with you a bit about something after all." (Chief)

The Chief says in a quite good-willed manner to the Forest Oni.

It seems the Kuzunoha Company is pretty loved in this village.

"Thanks. Ah, and also, if it is okay with you, use this." (Ririto)

What was given to the chief was a small container —a teacup.

"Hm? A cup? This feeling of touch is a first for me. What is this?" (Chief)

"It is a container that is made from earth; it is called pottery. I apologize for offering one that I made as a hobby, but the result was relatively good, so I am giving them away to customers." (Ririto)

"Earth. That's quite the unusual thing. Must be made from quite the special magic." (Chief)

"...No, not a single bit of magic was used in the making of it. It is a surprisingly fun thing to do, so I enjoy doing it in my free days covered in mud." (Ririto)

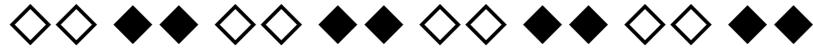
"Oh! This isn't an article made from magic?" (Chief)

"That's right. It is easier to break than ironware, but I would say it has its own characteristic good points. Well then, I will be opening the store for a bit, and then come back." (Ririto)

"Fumu, there's really mysterious techniques out there." (Chief)

"...I will be excusing myself." (Ririto)

While making a wry smile in his heart looking at the Chief who was checking out the teacup in admiration, Ririto headed to the plaza.



"They got me there. To think that they would propose a marriage interview. I was about to mistake the change." (Ririto)

The temporary store of the Kuzunoha Company had been sold out prosperously and closed.

Just like always.

The surroundings were turning dark, and by the time the lights of fire could be seen here and there, Ririto was already in the house of the Chief.

"There are many people in the village that think 'if only the Kuzunoha-sans would stay all the time at this Anode village'. Counting us here." (Chief)

"I am truly happy that we are being accepted this much. Of course, I will be coming from here on as well to Anode village as the person in charge. I have to keep you guys in check so that you don't fall sick after all." (Ririto)

The Chief, his son that is serving as his assistant, his wife, and his granddaughter; the five of them -counting Ririto-were having a lively dinner and had become a dinner where laughs were coming out constantly.

Even Ririto had a smile as he spoke.

"Oops, I was about to forget. Ririto-san, you said you had something to tell me, right? What is it?" (Chief)

"Thanks. Then, excuse me for a bit..." (Ririto)

Ririto stood up from his seat, and then, he unwraps the luggage that was left at a corner of the room.

This wrapping is called a wrapping cloth, and for the people of Kuzunoha that work in the peddling department, this is an essential tool.

What appeared was a wooden box that looked like a treasure box.

"I am thinking about leaving this in Chief's house." (Ririto)

"A treasure box...no, a chest?" (Chief)

"It is called a communication box. It is something that we are leaving only in the frequented villages under permission. With this box, it is possible to get in contact with us." (Ririto)

"...Hoh." (Chief)

The eyes of the Chief were showing slight caution.

It is obvious.

He is in the standing of chief, so it is understandable that he would show doubts in leaving an unknown magic tool, whose effects and origins are not clear, in his village.

Since those doubts were still not coming out as words, Ririto decided on continuing the explanation.

First, he opened the box and showed the inside.

The inside had partition plates, dividing it in 9 spaces, and there was nothing inside them.

“The inside is like this. Putting it simply, when required, you can put this in the frames.” (Ririto)

Ririto takes out a cloth bag from inside his pocket and takes out a black ball he shows to the chief.

“Meaning that if you put this black ball inside, we will know.” (Ririto)

“It is called ‘communication’, but it is not as if we will be exchanging words. It is more like a smoke signal of sorts huh.” (Chief)

“It doesn’t let out smoke though, but yeah, it is something like that. For example; in the case where a patient with a sudden illness needs medicine, or there’s some sort of accident or a natural disaster where you are in need for goods, you can use this. A person of the company will be sent, at the slowest, by the next day.” (Ririto)

“The next day?! That’s fast. Umu... It is true that being able to come in moments when the village is in need would be good, but...as expected, I can’t make an immediate decision. I trust the Kuzunoha-sans, but I can’t leave a magic tool inside the village without the opinion of everyone.” (Chief)

“Yeah, of course. We are not in a hurry for an answer. You can answer us the next time we come, or even by the time after. If you don’t want to leave it here, we will still be coming for business as usual, so don’t worry.” (Ririto)

Ririto didn’t show any signs of being offended by the apologetic words of the chief, and while maintaining his smile, he accepts his words.

The casual talk continued again for a while more, and even when the dinner

finished, it transitioned to drinking, and the talk didn't show any signs of ending.

The granddaughter of the chief was doing her best to stay awake and was nodding as she was listening to the talk of Ririto with her parents and grandfather, but she finally began to doze off, and fell asleep slightly before everyone else.

Watching his granddaughter being carried by her mother and leaving, the Chief glanced at Ririto, stood up from his seat, and left the room.

Ririto nods at the chief's son who serves as the assistant, and followed after the chief.

"Sorry about that. My granddaughter looks forward to the Kuzunoha-sans coming and was quite excited. I ended up allowing her to sleep late. You can go ahead and laugh at me for being a soft old man." (Chief)

"I also passed a fun night. By the way, did you have something to talk about that required clearing out everyone else?" (Ririto)

"...Yeah. I have heard the Kuzunoha Company does business with remote places like us and demi-human villages. Does Ririto-san also jump around pretty often?" (Chief)

"Yes. I am in charge of around ten settlements. My job is to go around villages as well as stocking up." (Ririto)

"Of course, those ten settlements you speak of are from around this place, right?" (Chief)

"That's right. Since I am going to each place in order, the places we are in charge of are mostly close to each other." (Ririto)

"Then, I want you to hear me out for a bit. Around 40 kilometers west from here, there's a village, you see." (Chief)

"Yeah, a demi-human village. I stopped by that village before coming here." (Ririto)

"...Oh, so you were already aware of their existence huh. I wanted to consult about that village." (Chief)

The expression of the chief darkened.

“Is it a talk regarding a number of villagers being injured?” (Ririto)

“Hngh. Yeah, that’s right. It is a village that we haven’t done any exchanges with once before, and only a few in our village know about the existence of that village. I thought it would stay like that from now on as well. But a number of our hunters left to the forest and returned with wounds made by weapons. The wounds itself can be healed by the medicine of the Kuzunoha-sans, but...”

(Chief)

“You think that this was the work of the demi-humans huh.” (Ririto)

“There’s no mamonos that use weapons around these areas. The only ones who are suspicious are them.” (Chief)

“Actually...there were injured in their side as well. They asked me about this village, but I told them that the Anode village has no reason to do something like that, and had cleared up the suspicions just recently. To think that this village had something similar happen.” (Ririto)

“...The demi-humans as well? That’s...” (Chief)

“This forest is not under the supervision of the country, so, putting it bluntly, it is an outlaw land. It is plenty possible for people of the outside to come here, take me for instance.” (Ririto)

“True, that’s also a possibility huh. There’s demi-humans like the ones in the Kuzunoha-sans, so prejudice is no good. It is a pretty hard thing to fix though...” (Chief)

“I will try to investigate and report to you the next time I come. Is that alright?” (Ririto)

“Sorry about that. How much would it cost?” (Chief)

“I will be charging for the actual expenses, so I don’t think it would cost much, though I can’t speak about the specific cost right now though.” (Ririto)

Ririto said he can’t say about the specific cost, but he immediately answered that it would be the actual expenses.

The Chief made a surprised expression for a moment, but he soon nodded

several times.

“Since things are like this, I don’t mind if at first it is only an investigation. But I didn’t expect you to accept the task as if nothing. So the words Ririto-san said when you first came to the village about ‘undertaking anything’ were true huh.” (Chief)

“Only things that our company can do, that is. Anode village is a frequent customer, so we will be jumping to action as soon as possible. Even if it is a situation that I can’t resolve myself, we have skillful people in Kuzunoha, so please rest at ease.” (Ririto)

“The Kuzunoha-sans also deal with mercenaries? With the ability of being able to order medicines, clothes, and many other detailed stuff; have to say, big companies are truly impressive.” (Chief)

“I am simply going to be asking my coworkers that work in dangerous areas. We don’t offer mercenary services, and in terms of our scale, I would say...we have finally crossed the mid-size? We are practically a beginner company.” (Ririto)

Since the Forest Onis lived in a dangerous area that’s called the World’s Border, there’s actually many in the Forest Onis who would surpass the ability of the average mercenary, but Ririto didn’t explain that much.

“I would like to speak to a superior of yours at least once.” (Chief)

“Thanks. I will definitely tell this to my superiors. Also, about the matter of the box before, the ball is of one use, and we will be charging for replenishing them, so please use them with care.” (Ririto)

“Hoh, charging huh.” (Chief)

“The first one will be free of charge though. There were a number of cases where we left boxes in other villages and they used them as a joke after all. The objective of this is not for constant calls, but for emergency situations, so we ended up having to charge for them now. Sorry. If you allow us to leave it here, I will be reducing the price of the goods sold in the village a bit, so we want it to not be a loss on your side. Please pardon us.” (Ririto)

“We will be the ones calling you people in a hurry, so I don’t really mind.

Understood.” (Chief)

“Thanks. Then, I have to make preparations for the investigation as well, so let’s leave the invitation for staying the night to another occasion. Thanks for the meal.” (Ririto)

“Okay. Ririto-san, there’s no need to be so formal with—he is not here anymore.” (Chief)

The chief was about to stop Ririto who had stood up.

But he was already not there.

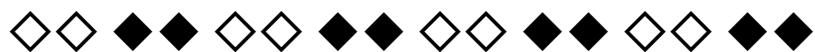
Wind blew for a bit in the room and grazed the cheek of the chief.

“I will have the villagers refrain from going out for a bit, and make the field work and security half and half. It depends on the investigation of the Kuzunoha-sans, but it might get a bit noisy around here. Ririto is a person that can bring luggage to this village alone, so he must also be quite the strong person, and yet, there’s people higher than him huh. When this matter is over, let’s try properly requesting Ririto-san to meet with his superior and their representative.” (Chief)

The old man that was left in the room had his hand placed on his chin and was thinking about how to deal with things at present.

The small Anode village that’s deep deep within a forest and is not affiliated to any country.

The Kuzunoha Company was involved even with such places.



“Well then, the culprit for both incidents is most likely the same. Even I alone would probably be enough...no, I have to report it. Let’s leave the decision to after I have consulted with the higher-ups. It is right in schedule after all.” (Ririto)

Inside the darkness of the night, Ririto mutters while sitting on the branch of a specially big tree.

He silently closed his eyes and confirms that the thought transmission had connected with his superior.

(Ah, it is Rrito. Tomoe-sama, there's actually a matter that I would like extra hands for. Yes, there was an incident in two of the villages I am in charge of where a number of people were injured..... And so, I was wondering if I could get some hands for the investigation. Two winged-kin and two Gorgons? N-No, I don't think it is an opponent that requires so much!) (Rrito)

Rrito was properly erasing his presence, but an unexpected development happened in the conversation with his superior, making his balance crumble for a bit.

Luckily, he was at a slightly faraway location from both the hyuman village of Anode and from the demi-human village, so no one saw him.

(To accustom them to the outside huh. Okay, if that's why... Yes, both of the villages know that I am a demi-human. There's no problem in that. Understood..... No way! Please don't apologize. This is not the first time I will be teaching newbies. I will show you that I can do it properly. Eh, me training to work at the store in Rotsgard? ...I currently want to continue my outside work like this. Ah, only in holidays? If that's the case, I would be glad to. Ah...that as well huh. Leaving aside Akua, I would say that it would be wiser to make Eris just serve customers that would like being served by her. Yes. Then, I will be meeting those four at the usual place. It would be a great help. Well then, I will be excusing myself.) (Rrito)

A sigh comes out from the mouth of Rrito.

For him, his superior Tomoe is a person that would make him nervous even when it is only to do reports.

But there's a decent amount of expectation for him.

That's the kind of conversation it was.

“Training will be in the mornings, and in the afternoon, I will be the one teaching huh. Well, in Rotsgard there's no doubt gonna be the new desserts of Waka-sama and Shiki-sama, so I am looking forward to it. Since winged-kins will be helping out in the investigation, it probably won't be too difficult, so for my plans in the weekend...” (Rrito)

The Forest Oni Rrito, that does his best in the peddling department of the

Kuzunoha Company, currently hasn't participated in battle and doesn't have much achievements that stand out, but he is constantly going from village to village of frequent customers and obtaining trust, so for the Kuzunoha Company, he is an important member of the working field.

They are the shadow that spread the name of the Kuzunoha Company that Makoto's store spreads from the surface.

The peddler unit is called in a friendly manner as the Kuzunoha-sans, and they jump around from place to place everyday in this way.

Extra Story XXVIII: Kuzunoha-san ②

“Rrito, we finished the investigation.”

“Oh! As expected of the Winged-kin, you guys work fast! It helps out a lot.”
(Rrito)

At a certain tea store in Rotsgard, the Forest Oni Rrito was taking a rest, and in that time, a man with wings approached Rrito, and after calling him, he sat on the opposite seat.

“Fuh, but this place is truly boisterous. In terms of hyuman settlements, I only know of Tsige and this one, but both of them are way too lively for us. We gather unnecessary attention because of these wings after all.” (Winged-kin)

“I also go around a good number of towns and villages, but I don't see any winged people. It can't be helped that it is like this at first.” (Rrito)

“If I can be of use to Waka-sama, this much I can endure, but... there's no doubt that I would feel more at ease circulating around remote regions.”
(Winged-kin)

The Winged-kin was wincing at the attention he was gathering from his appearance.

He made a big sigh at first and seemed to be somewhat tired.

“Since you guys were assigned to me, that's probably the case. Also, Robaro-san, when at work, don't use 'ore' but 'watakushi'. For us, the 'outside' is a

workplace.” (Ririto) <Watakushi is the more formal version of I. Ore is informal.>

“...Right. I end up speaking in the usual way out of habit. Hm, but I think there were other ways of saying ‘I’ that were allowed...” (Robaro)

“Yeah, ‘sesha’ and ‘soregashi’. I haven’t seen anyone using those for now though.” (Ririto) <Really old ways of speaking. Definitely Tomoe at work there.>

“...I will go with ‘watakushi’.” (Winged-kin)

“Good. At first, you might have to put attention when speaking, but you will get used to it pretty soon. And so, about the results of the investigation...” (Ririto)

Ririto nods satisfied, and then, after putting a stop to his words, he looks at the surroundings.

Since he himself is a dark elf and is drawing eyes from the surroundings, and now, even a Winged-kin is there, the amount of attention they are gathering was enough to have the contents of the conversation leaked.

“Let’s leave. I will hear what you have to say at the second floor of the company.” (Ririto)

“Understood. The others are in the company as well. They are probably being used by Akua-san and Eris-san though.” (Robaro)

Ririto stands up from his seat and pays the bill, Robaro walks slightly further back from him; there were a good amount of people turning their gazes at them in the street, but they didn’t show any reaction to them in their expressions and return to the Kuzunoha Company.

The company was prospering today as well, and the customers that couldn’t enter yet to the store were having small talk outside as they were making a big line.

The two enter from the backdoor of the kitchen and go up to the second floor.

“Now then, what entered that big forest?” (Ririto)

Ririto asked for the investigation regarding the injuries that the chief of the

Anode village requested of him.

He reported it to his superior Tomoe, and was entrusted with 4 subordinates, or more like, 4 comrades to do work with him.

He received the order of Tomoe to supervise them while they investigate and to find the cause of the problem.

After dividing the work to each of them, Ririto was passing his time today in a tea store with the free time he had gotten, but since he received a report that the investigation had finished, he is now back to work.

The reason why Ririto said 'entered' is because he thought that the culprit of the incident is someone from the outside.

It is known that the demi-humans the chief suspected were completely innocent.

They also had injured in their side as well after all.

On top of that, the demi-humans heavily refuted the crime of using a sharp weapon to cause harm.

The demi-humans that live in a village at the same forest were a race that doesn't use much weapons after all.

"No, that's not it." (Robaro)

But Robaro shook his head and denied the deduction of Ririto.

"It is not a crime from an outsider? But neither of the villages showed any such motives for that though?" (Ririto)

"There's no intruders in that vast forest. It wasn't an outsider. The culprit was a demonic beast living there." (Robaro)

"Demonic beast? But the attacker used a weapon. I also confirmed it. Those were wounds made by a sharp edged tool." (Ririto)

A pretty big and sharp edged tool.

That's why Ririto thought that maybe it might be a troll or a giant that had stolen a weapon from an adventurer, or there's also the lower possibility of it being the deed of goblins and kobolds.

In the case of trolls and giants, the identity of the attacker was not confirmed by the attacked villagers which is a part that is worrying, so Ririto couldn't say for sure that was it.

"I will explain in order. At the outer circumference of a part in that forest, there's a pretty rare type of demonic beast inhabiting it. A coup d'etat occurred quite recently against the boss there." (Robaro)

"...Go on." (Ririto)

"And so, the side that lost was chased away and moved in order to find a new territory. If we draw the traces and the location where the villagers were attacked as well as the route they used in a map...it would look like this." (Robaro)

Robaro drew a few x and lines in the map of the big forest.

This map was an impromptu product made by Robaro and the other Winged-kin, but since they are able to see the terrain from up the sky, it was pretty accurately made.

On top of that, the lines had dates written on them, so he could tell that was the advance progress of the demonic beasts.

The places where the Anode and the demi-human villages were attacked were perfectly lined up with the dates and advance line.

"I see. It is practically decided huh. By the way, how did you manage to get the route, and even the speed of their advance?" (Ririto)

"The Gorgons were knowledgeable about that part. Thanks to that, we were able to get a rough idea of their route, and then, with the help of the Gorgon ladies taking charge using the details regarding the route, we managed to get this information." (Robaro)

"So you guys properly cooperated with each other huh. That's a good practice." (Ririto)

"...Or so you say. You divided the work in such a way that it would end up like this, right? I thought you would say something like 'just as planned'." (Robaro)

"By no means. I honestly think it is a splendid result. But regarding the

wounds..." (Ririto)

Ririto urges the continuation of his explanation as if he were a teacher waiting for the answer of a student.

"It is the tail of that demonic beast." (Robaro)

"Oh? The tail?" (Ririto)

"Yeah, their size is about the same of a horse or maybe slightly smaller. The characteristic trait of them is their long tail that has a length of about three meters. And they can actually move it." (Robaro)

"A demonic beast that has a long tail that can slash with it huh." (Ririto)

In that case, it would match with the conditions of the injured.

'If their movements are fast, it wouldn't be impossible for the villagers to be unable to see them', is what Ririto thought.

"For now, we are calling them Saber Cats. They can not only cut but thrust as well, so it might be more accurate to call them Fencer Cats though." (Robaro)

"Cats? Are they demonic beasts that resemble cats? Well, I don't really mind if the name is Saber or Fencer though." (Ririto)

"They are practically the same as cats. There's individual differences in their fur and patterns, but there were mostly ones that had the same color as the trunks of trees in their pack. But the boss was black. Even from afar, I could tell that the gloss of its fur was good; it was a black like that of a gem." (Robaro)

"Black huh. Then, for convenience sake, let's call the boss Black. If this is the work of the demonic beasts, then we can talk with Black and solve the problem." (Ririto)

If it is a proper demonic beast, there are actually many who can be communicated with.

Demonic beasts that hold special powers can understand words, and at times, even use magic.

That's why Ririto wanted to confirm the authenticity of their information with the cat demonic beasts, and after that, have a talk with the villages that were

injured.

“But getting close to them will be difficult, you know? They are sensitive to presences, and their ears and nose are good.” (Robaro)

“Then I will deploy a barrier. One Gorgon and one Winged-kin will also be acting as support. With that, we can deploy a barrier of several kilometers in size. After that, we will narrow that and have a talk with them.” (Ririto)

“They will definitely try to break it while we are narrowing it though. What will we do about that?” (Robaro)

“I will leave that part to you, Robaro-san. Watch over from the sky and if one of them escapes from that barrier, deal with it please.” (Ririto)

“...The Gorgons said that...if possible, they want to bring them back.” (Robaro)

“...Robaro-san, please try to make it a habit to say those kind of things along with your report. Then, I will talk about that with Tomoe-sama, but...it is best to not get your hopes up. Tomoe-sama is a strict one, and most of all, there will most likely be the need of the culprits’ blood no matter what in order to calm down this incident.” (Ririto)

“Because there were wounded?” (Robaro)

“That’s right. We are solely moving under the request of the villages. Please understand that we are prioritizing their feelings and solving the problem.” (Ririto)

“Understood.” (Robaro)

“Okay. Well then, let’s fill in the other three. Are they down?” (Ririto)

“Yeah.” (Robaro)

After Ririto finished hearing the report, he decided on what to do and left the room.

There, he met with an unexpected reality.

“Ah, uhm...Ririto-san, is it? Why are you...here?”

“W-W-W-W-W-Waka-sama?!” (Ririto)

“Waa?!” (Makoto)

The one who appeared after opening the door was the Kuzunoha Company's representative, Raidou. In other words, the employer of Ririto and Robaro, and in terms of his standing in Asora, he would be the king.

If such a person were to appear suddenly, even Ririto would get flustered.

"Geez, please spare me from getting surprised as if you have seen a monster."

(Makoto)

"That's right-ja zo, you guys. That's rude to Waka-sama."

"Even Tomoe-sama?!" (Ririto)

"Ah-ah-ah..." (Robaro)

Even Tomoe had come up from the stairs to the second floor, and leaving aside Ririto, Robaro had fallen into heavy panic.

"Eh? Tomoe, it is rare for you to be in the store at this time." (Makoto)

"I had something to talk about with the guys that do outside work. I already finished that, so I was thinking about greeting Waka first before returning."

(Tomoe)

"I see. Is it okay to not talk about that with Ririto-san as well? He is also in the area of outside work, if I remember correctly." (Makoto)

"...Waka, it is not a bad thing to use -san with people you are not well acquainted with, but please call the Forest Onis and the people of Asora without honorifics. If you call Mio and I without honorifics but them with, it would feel bad, you know? Also, this time's talk is not within the related field of Ririto." (Tomoe)

"Please, please call me as Ririto!" (Ririto)

"...I see. You do have a point. Sorry. Uhm...and what's the name of that Winged-kin over there?" (Makoto)

"Ro-Roba-Roba—" (Robaro)

"Roba? That's quite the peculiar name." (Makoto)

"Hah... What are you getting all nervous for-ja? Waka, this guy here is called Robaro. He showed decent ability a few days ago, so I left him under the

custody of Ririto and am currently watching over how it goes.” (Tomoe)

Tomoe sighs and complements the words of Robaro.

From the eyes of Robaro, Raidou is a person that their patriarch would prepare himself to give reports to, and also the person the patriarch goes to to do things like make petitions.

It was quite difficult for him to act naturally when being caught off-guard.

“Ririto and Robaro huh. In any case, thanks for the hard work. Since you are here in Rotsgard, how about having a small break?” (Makoto)

“Thanks for the consideration!! I did have a break already and am about to return to work!!” (Ririto)

It may not be on the level of Robaro, but Ririto was also pretty nervous himself.

The only ones within the Forest Onis that can comfortably talk with Raidou are Akua and Eris who are allowed to be by his side. For them, Raidou is a special existence.

“...If I remember correctly, you guys were investigating an incident from some villages in a forest, right? Since we are already here, let’s hear the progress.” (Tomoe)

Tomoe looked into space for a while and remembers their work.

She quickly grasped the job that was currently assigned to Ririto and prompted a report.

“Yes! We have found out the identity of what are most likely the ones who attacked the villages, and we are about to head there to confirm.” (Ririto)

“Hoh. Quite the fast work. And so, did your deduction hit the target?” (Tomoe)

“...No, sadly. It was probably the work of a special demonic beast. Also, there’s a request regarding the demonic beast that I would like to ask of Tomoe-sama.” (Ririto)

“Let’s hear it.” (Tomoe)

“Those demonic beasts are cats that have a size on the same level as horses and use their long tail as an edged tool. The Gorgons that were in the investigation as well have taken an interest in that demonic beast. They said that, if possible, they would like to bring those demonic beasts to Asora. So, I wanted Tomoe-sama to decide on this.” (Ririto)

The word ‘cats’ caught the attention of Makoto and raised his head, but Ririto didn’t notice.

Of course, Robaro didn’t notice either.

And Tomoe was showing a bitter expression in regards to bringing them to Asora.

Seeing this, Ririto made a face of ‘as I thought’.

“Ririto, it is not an easy matter to bring them to Asora. There’s obviously the problem of ability, but there’s also the intentions of those guys as well. No matter how much the Gorgons wish for it, do you think I can say ‘do as you wish’?” (Tomoe)

“...No.” (Ririto)

“In the first place, what are you guys planning on doing after bringing back big cats that use their tails as edged tools-ja?” (Tomoe)

“Can I have a word?” (Robaro)

Robaro raises his hand at what Tomoe said.

“What is it-ja?” (Tomoe)

“Regarding the opinion of the Gorgons, they said that there’s the possibility that those cat demonic beasts can be domesticated. They also said that it might be possible to use them as mounts. They have a convenient tail, so they could be used for pioneering as well.” (Robaro)

“Mounts huh... The idea is not bad... but I don’t think riding a cat would be comfortable. As expected, I can’t allow—” (Tomoe)

Tomoe didn’t notice.

That Makoto had begun to smile when hearing about the cats.

That he was mumbling ‘cat’ ‘cat’ in a low tone.

“Tomoe!” (Makoto)

“Uo?! Waka? What is it all of a sudden?” (Tomoe)

“I agree with it.” (Makoto)

“...Hah?” (Tomoe)

“Those cats—if they agree with it, let’s have them come to Asora. The Gorgons are planning on looking after them, right? They seem to be demonic beasts, so there’s no real necessity to domesticate them. We can simply accept them as comrades after all!” (Makoto)

He was interested.

Makoto was totally interested.

Because he likes cats.

And since coming to this world, he doesn’t really see size as much of a problem anymore.

The most would be whether they are worth petting, and whether brushing them will be difficult.

“Waka, what are you suddenly saying without even confirming their abilities?” (Tomoe)

“Tomoe, Japanese people lived together with cats. And yet, there’s no cats in Asora. This is a problem. This is a big problem for you as well who strives for a Japanese lifestyle.” (Makoto)

“I-Is that so?” (Tomoe)

“That’s right! There’s the nemuri-neko

, right? The simple action of cats curling up in a sunny spot or verandas can become a painting.” (Makoto)

With the fact that they are the size of horses, verandas would be a tall order.

Tomoe furrowed her brows and opened her closed eyes.

“...And that’s how it is, Ririto.” (Tomoe)

“Eh, Tomoe-sama?” (Ririto)

“If Waka says so, my opinion doesn’t matter. If those cats want, you can bring them.” (Tomoe)

“Is that really okay?” (Ririto)

“Don’t make me repeat myself. Waka said it was okay.” (Tomoe)

“Y-Yes!” (Ririto)

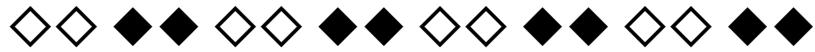
“When you are done with that, make sure to write that report down, got it? Go at once!” (Tomoe)

“I will be taking my leave!” (Ririto)

“Me as well!” (Robaro)

“I will be counting on you guys~.” (Makoto)

Ririto and Robaro lowered their heads to Makoto and Tomoe, and then, run down the stairs at a speed as if they were falling down from them.



At night.

Close to the center of the forest that had now fallen silent.

After notifying beforehand to the Anode village and the demi-human village that it might get noisy, Ririto and his group had moved to action.

As planned, Ririto and two other supports will be covering the area where the Saber Cats pack will be in.

The demonic beasts noticed the abnormality immediately and began acting, but their attacks to the barrier ended in failure.

It is a barrier that Forest Onis specialize in when creating a special field, moreover, a Gorgon and Winged-kin are supporting in deploying it.

A slightly unusual demonic beast wouldn’t be able to break through it.

“Ririto-senpai, I am sorry for requesting something unreasonable. I thought we wouldn’t get permission for it though.” (Gorgon)

“...It is just that a miracle happened. I didn’t do anything. *The crane spoke.*”

(Ririto) <one word from the crane, meaning the “voice of authority”, the one who has the final word that can’t be challenged. That is how high the crane is regarded, no one questions his opinions.>

“??”

“Waka-sama said it is okay to bring them. Tomoe-sama was pushed back.”
(Ririto)

“E-Eh?! Did Waka-sama also understand the cuteness of those little ones?”
(Gorgon)

The Gorgon that was assisting in the barrier of Ririto was surprised at the outcome of things.

“It seems like he is a cat lover.” (Ririto)

“...Cats huh. Looks like I could use the topic of pets as a means to get closer to him~.” (Gorgon2)

While Ririto was walking as he paid attention to his surroundings, the other Gorgon seemed to be pondering something.

“I was thinking about doing that, so you can’t!” (Gorgon)

“Idiot, isn’t it obvious that the one who uses it first is the one that wins?”
(Gorgon2)

“Muuh...” (Gorgon)

No one would believe that this is the atmosphere of people that are approaching fearsome demonic beasts.

The barrier was being narrowed without problems, and Robaro, who was watching over the plan from the sky, didn’t have much to do as time went by.

The other Winged-kin man that was assisting the barrier of Ririto was probably the silent type, the talk of the two Gorgons went on with just those two alone.

Talk about society, talk about fashion; the topics of the conversation were changing frequently without any sign of being nervous as they enjoyed themselves.

Ririto has been going outside Asora, so he has gotten used to this kind of talk between girls.

In the past, he was confused by how orbitless their conversations could get, but now, it is a nice memory for him.

“...Ara, looks like the talk ends here.” (Gorgon2)

The Gorgon takes a step forward and stops her other comrades with her arm as she keeps up her guard on the surroundings.

Within the group, she is the one who has the highest close-combat prowess.

Following after -or more like, almost at the same level-there's Ririto, but right now his job is the barrier.

Both Gorgons are wearing glasses, but the one who walked forward took off those glasses and threw them to Ririto without looking back.

A special aura was filling up the place that was different from that of the barrier.

But the inherent special ability that's sealed because of the glasses didn't activate even when she took them off.

“Natsuha, when did you manage to control your eyes?” (Ririto)

Ririto was showing unhidable surprise at the Gorgon, Natsuha, who had entered battle mode.

By the way, the Gorgons are a race that doesn't have 'names'. They were all named by Makoto.

“Since when, you say... We can't go outside without being able to do this. You didn't know?” (Natsuha)

“I didn't. Tomoe-sama and Waka-sama didn't say anything about it after all.” (Ririto)

“Fufu. I didn't know you spoke in such a polite manner, so let's call it even. But well, even if I talk all big, I still can't control it perfectly. For now, I have enough control so that even if I were to take off my glasses suddenly, I won't turn my surroundings into stone.” (Natsuha)

“...You are one step further than me it seems. I have been lenient in my training lately. I am scared of the next time we have a bout.” (Ririto)

“Last time was my lost, right? Nfufu, next time won’t be the same~. Well, rather than my combat ability, I would prefer increasing my level in conquering Shiki-sama or Waka-sama though. Those two have a high guard regarding to those kind of things after all. I would like them to learn of Lime.” (Natsuha)

Ririto holds his head as if in pain.

In reality, these two are on the same level of combat prowess, and have many moments where they have bouts.

“Ririto-senpai’s state has changed a bit. Maybe he is thinking about something?” (Gorgon)

“Uzuki has also gotten strangely good at grasping signs. Seeing this, Robaro and Egi have probably gotten quite strong themselves as well. Looks like I will be able to take it easy which is a happy miscalculation.” (Ririto)

“No, I...haven’t gotten that strong, you know? I honestly don’t know why I was chosen. The only trait I have is that I am diligent after all.” (Egi)

The one who spoke was the Winged-kin that was silently doing his job and clearly had a more negative countenance than the other members.

This man called Egi had a kind face and slender body, and had exactly the timid personality that went with his appearance.

“This time there won’t be a tough job for you, Egi. Don’t worry, you can have Ririto help you out and you will be okay.” (Natsuha)

Natsuha comforted Egi with a leisure tone while her hair undulated.

“Here they come! Four from the front, two from the left, two from the right! And also...up?! There’s another coming from overhead! Also at where Robaro-san is! No way, they are running in the sky...” (Uzuki)

“Uzuki, please calm down. Call Robaro with thought transmission—” (Ririto)

“I have already done that!” (Uzuki)

“Then put your all in maintaining the barrier. Egi, if the ones at the front get

pass Natsuha—" (Ririto)

"Done with the right side. Doing the clean up on the left side now." (Egi)

After throwing in a number of thinly shining spears made from magic, Egi answers.

There was already a newly made spear in his hand.

"...Okay. Natsuha, concentrate on the front—" (Ririto)

"Hm? What?" (Natsuha)

Ririto was about to send other instructions, but stops his words.

What was at the front were trees turned to stone and three demonic beasts that were about to attack her turned to stone as well.

It was a sight dyed in gray.

"No, nothing." (Ririto)

(I really had nothing to do.) (Ririto)

(I finished dealing with the cat that ran to the sky. Haha, I was scared there. It was doing the same thing as Waka-sama, so I unintentionally went all out.)
(Robaro)

Ririto was monologuing out of amazement, and while he was at it, Robaro sent a thought transmission from the sky.

(Good work. Well then, you can come down now.) (Ririto)

(Understood.) (Robaro)

The short thought transmission ends.

"Ririto-senpai! Natsu!" (Uzuki)

Uzuki calls Ririto in a loud voice.

That's right. Even though it was an overwhelming difference in power that can't even be described as a battle, it wasn't over yet.

The demonic beast coming from the sky that had evaded the eyes of Natsuha still remained.

“Well, anyone that sees these eyes would obviously try to attack us from behind instead. But...that’s the first thing we make countermeasures for, you know?” (Natsuha)

The petrification was slowly advancing from the front.

Natsuha muttered these words at the demonic beast that had purposely gone up and was trying to attack from the back.

“You skilfully utilized my blindspot to get all the way here, so I won’t turn you into stone.” (Natsuho)

Different from the name that the girls gave them, the demonic beast used the long tail as a bending edge and it approached the neck of Natsuha.

But...

It was caught by her hardened hair, and the demonic beast was thrown just like that, smashed into the trees turned to stone.

The Sabre Cat disappeared into the darkness of the forest just like that, but... there was no counterattack.

There was also one other that was hiding in the darkness.

He was using that black fur to his advantage and turned into one with the darkness.

In time, the tail, claws, and fangs came out from within the trees and aimed at, not Natsuha, but Ririto.

“...”

Ririto was calm.

He was already aware of its presence and had weapons in both hands.

At some point in time, he had blackened daggers in his hands.

These are his weapons.

He repels the first thrust attack of the tail without looking up, and then, skilfully turned his body and evaded the fangs and claws that were coming at him at the same time.

They were movements that had no waste and had the least amount of motion.

After that, he stopped the demonic beast that was about to take distance by piercing its leg with the dagger, and then, adds a short aria.

With just that, the dagger had bound the demonic beast to the ground and was not allowed to move a single step.

Then, the remaining dagger was placed at its neck, and with the now free hand he had, he sealed a part of the movements of the demonic beast.

They were simple moves, but truly quickly executed.

“Now then, since you are a demonic beast, words should work, right? Let’s have a talk.” (Ririto)

With a threatening smile, Ririto speaks to the suppressed demonic beast.

And in this way, the night show that couldn’t even called a fight had now ended.



“How was the result?” (Uzuki)

“It went well. As a result of bringing a corpse of the demonic beasts to the Anode village and explaining the situation, we managed to make them accept coexisting with the remaining living demonic beasts.” (Ririto)

“The demi-humans were also okay with it. They said they would leave it to the Kuzunoha Company in regards to how it will be dealt with. They also asked us to increase the amount of ores sold though.” (Robaro)

“Robaro-san, thanks for the hard work. The demi-humans there have a rare ability of being able to speak with stones, right? Aren’t those guys going to be invited to Asora?” (Uzuki)

Uzuki received Ririto and Robaro who have just returned.

“It is true that they do have hard skin as well and are quite peculiar. It is probably because of those things too that they are living in a remote place. It is not something we should pry into though.” (Ririto)

Rrito answers in place of Robaro.

Rrito is the one who is the most acquainted to them, so it is not anything strange to him.

“They don’t seem to have any intentions of coming to Asora, so wouldn’t that mean the current relationship we have with them is the best one? Isn’t it fine this way? We have also safely finished the job regarding the Saber Cats after all!” (Natsuha)

Natsuha was completely relaxing now that the matter had been safely resolved.

“We also finished talking with the boss of the previous pack. We did kill a number of them, but Black understood our request and accepted coming to Asora. With this, we will be able to give a good report to Tomoe-sama and Waka-sama... Ah~, that’s great.” (Rrito)

In the end, Rrito spoke about Makoto and lets out a truly relieved voice.

The point that was pressuring him the most was whether they would be able to bring the Saber Cats to Asora or not, so he felt as if a heavy luggage had come down.

“I am looking forward to it, aren’t you, Natsu? With this, those little ones will be our comrades in Asora.” (Uzuki)

“It will be decently difficult until they get used to it though. Especially in terms of ability.” (Natsuha)

“It will be okay...probably.” (Uzuki)

The Gorgons were also in great delight that the demonic beasts will be coming to Asora as per request.

In the end, Rrito reported that after explaining to the Anode village and the demi-human settlement that the threat of the Saber Cats had been caused by the rampage of a number of their pack and that they had dealt with it, the situation had been settled.

The actual corpses provided plenty enough persuasiveness, and there was also a proposal of dividing the territory to coexist with the Saber Cats.

Both villages have a tendency of not wanting interference from the outside, so the Saber Cats flashing glares at the outer circumference of the forest was taken as a merit, thus, it was received pretty favorably.

From now on, in a not so close future, the Anode village and the demi-human settlement will be trading goods to each other with the Kuzunoha Company as the intermediary.

This is a happy miscalculation for Ririto.

“Well then, let’s go back quickly. We have a lot of other jobs after all.”
(Robaro)

“Robaro-san, please listen to conversations in a bit more calm of a manner. Even in Anode village, you were scaring people, you know?” (Ririto)

“Not like having a kind tone is always the correct way. Those villagers are being deceived by Ririto.” (Robaro)

“How rude.” (Ririto)

“Ahaha! Nice comeback. The fighting style of Ririto is basically that of an assassin after all! ‘Even if his tone is kind, he is actually an assassin’, isn’t that a scam? Ufufu.” (Natsuha)

“True.” (Egi)

“Yeah, I thought that as well.” (Uzuki)

“...Everyone...in terms of standing, I am supposed to be the superior here, are you forgetting that? You are not forgetting that I still haven’t written the report of this matter yet, right? You guys are prepared, right?” (Ririto)

Ririto’s group was having a lively talk after finishing a job.

They still didn’t know that their next job would be with the same members, moreover, in the cold Demon territory.

The Kuzunoha-sans’ activities will be continuing from here on as well.

Extra Story XXIX: Story about the Gorgon-sans

Going to the outside.

For the residents of Asora, this holds a special meaning.

Going to their original living place that is the wasteland doesn't have that much of a meaning.

It only becomes 'special' when the location is within hyuman territory.

In those cases, there's the need to clear strict requirements set by the lord of Asora -Raidou-and his followers, or the permission won't be granted.

Working in the Kuzunoha Company at Tsige or Rotsgard, or temporarily being called by their lord for business at those places is beginning to hold a special meaning in the residents of Asora.

It is not as if Misumi Makoto himself has placed a special worth to it.

Just that, there's the need to be quite the competent one in order to get permission.

Because of this fact, it has created worth inside of them.

In the races, there's ceremonies and trials to test each individual to see if they are competent, but for many of the races, receiving the permission to go outside is taken as a step further from the trials.

"Since when did it turn that way?"

"It was before we even noticed. It is not as if it was imposed as a trial, but it looks like it has turned out that way."

"I do give out the permission to go outside even when they are not strong though?" (Makoto)

"Even so, there's the need to be excelling at something. For example; for the eldwas, it has become a big evaluation of their skills as a blacksmith."

“I see. And so, the Winged-kin and the Gorgons are growing impatient to go outside.” (Makoto)

“Yes. But the Gorgons are a difficult matter. In order to let them outside, it would be an absolute necessary to control that indiscriminate petrification ability they have. I heard that, at present, the ability goes out at full-throttle the moment their glasses come off.”

At the home of Makoto in Asora.

The conversation of the two was being done in his room.

One of them is Makoto and the other one is his first follower, Tomoe.

Knock knock

“Hm? Who is it?” (Makoto)

“Shiki. Is it okay?” (Shiki)

“...Come in.” (Makoto)

“Excuse me. It is a matter that involves me, so I was thinking of intruding.”
(Shiki)

“Involves Shiki?” (Makoto)

Makoto directs his gaze at Shiki who entered in a reserved manner after knocking the door.

“About the Gorgons. I think you remember that Waka-sama had ordered me to create a tool to control their petrification ability.” (Shiki)

“Yeah.” (Makoto)

“To tell the truth, after that, they consulted me if there was a way to control their ability without the need to rely on a tool.” (Shiki)

“Oh? Those girls consulting. Shiki, did they suck you dry to your bones?”
(Tomoe)

Hearing the words of Shiki about this consultation, Tomoe teased him with a wide smile.

“Tomoe-dono, I have completely dried in regards to those things already.”

(Shiki)

“No way that’s the case with that bearing of yours, right? Aren’t you doing something in the dark like ‘the reward will be with your body?’” (Tomoe)

The look of Shiki is that of a young man in his twenties.

There’s no one who would acknowledge that he is dried.

The amazed words of Tomoe weren’t far from how others view him.

“I also lived a so-so life in the hyuman society after all. I have learned how to handle women. In the first place, Lime is currently the one who has taken that role. He is a lot younger and has more energy than me. He should be most suitable for it.” (Shiki)

“...I see. They have made Lime their body attendant huh. He is a lustful man after all. Let’s have him taste paradise for a bit..... The future after that will be a tragic one though. Don’t bully Lime too much, Shiki.” (Tomoe)

“It is important to gain experience while young. I think he will come back with a new skin peeled.” (Shiki)

“Fumu...” (Tomoe)

“So Waka-sama, about the matter of controlling the Gorgon’s petrification ability...” (Shiki)

Nodding once at Tomoe who had fallen into thought, Shiki turns back to Makoto.

“After you were asked about the consultation huh. Continue.” (Makoto)

“At present, it is only a few, but there’s some who are now able to control it without their glasses. It is hard to say that it is completely controlled, but it is on a level that doesn’t cause an hindrance in daily life.” (Shiki)

“Meaning that there are now people that don’t need glasses?” (Makoto)

“No, it is more like they are doing what the glasses do themselves. It doesn’t end up in a situation where the ability activates right at the moment they take off their glasses, but they can’t maintain that state for long without glasses. That’s the kind of state they are in right now.” (Shiki)

“...They are beginning to control their petrification ability, but it still makes me uneasy to let them outside.” (Makoto)

“I think we will be able to arrive at a level where we can get the approval from Waka-sama soon. That’s one of the things I wanted to report to Waka-sama.” (Shiki)

Hearing the recent state of the Gorgons from Shiki, Makoto made a bitter smile and showed a negative outlook in letting the Gorgons go to settlements.

It may be unconscious, but the standards that Makoto has for the many races to leave outside are pretty strict.

He judges from outward appearance, from ability, and from their personality.

The Orcs and Lizardmen, aside from really limited moments, are not allowed in areas where they have contact with humans.

Even the Dwarfs and Forest Onis that have cleared the appearance threshold need quite the skill in order to be acknowledged to work in the company.

In regards to the Gorgon race, even with the explosive improvement from the report of Shiki, Makoto has concluded that, in terms of result, it is still not enough.

There wasn’t any ill intention. Rather, it is because he is protective of the Asora residents that he is showing such a strict side.

“And so, the other one is a request from the Gorgons to Waka-sama. I have been entrusted with telling you that request.” (Shiki)

“Request?” (Makoto)

“Gorgons don’t have names to denote each individual.” (Shiki)

“Eh? They don’t?” (Makoto)

Makoto gave out a flabbergasted response.

Now that he was told that and he looked back on it, he noticed that he doesn’t know the names of the Gorgons.

Matriarch-san, Onee-san, Imouto-san, Gorgon-san; Makoto noticed that he was handling it in this way.

“They normally don’t get involved with other races, so it seems there wasn’t much inconvenience until now. Because they lived their life with their eyes covered, they got used to telling who the other person was by their scent and presence, and it was also because they were able to sharply perceive the individual’s characteristics by enhancing themselves with magic power.” (Shiki)

“True. Their perceptiveness is outshone by their petrification ability so it doesn’t stand out, but it is actually incredibly high. It is not wide, but precise kinda thing.” (Makoto)

“Names will be necessary in order to go outside. It also connected to their motivation, so it would be great if Waka-sama—” (Shiki)

“Wait, Shiki.” (Tomoe)

“Tomoe-dono?” (Shiki)

“I understand what you want to say, and the Gorgons do have a point. But won’t receiving a name from Waka-sama himself become a problem?” (Tomoe)

“...As I thought, you think that huh.” (Shiki)

“It can be taken as preferential treatment. We are the only ones who have received a name directly from Waka after all.” (Tomoe)

“The other day, Waka-sama summoned Mist Lizards and gave them names. There’s precedent.” (Shiki)

“That’s more like a codename in order to identify them. If we were to say names...they could also be considered names though... But in the first place, the Mist Lizards have names, so the names that Waka gave them are treated more like titles, you know.” (Tomoe)

Tomoe and Shiki were exchanging a variety of opinions in regards to the effects it would bring to Asora.

As for Makoto, he was muttering ‘names...names...’.

“Well, it is something necessary. Waka would be no good, and me doing it would be a pain—I mean, it would go against the request of the Gorgons.” (Tomoe)

“That’s why I think the best option would be to have Waka-sama think of their

names." (Shiki)

"...Umu." (Tomoe)

"...Yeah..." (Shiki)

After what seemed to be a meaningful space of silence, the two nodded heavily.

"Thinking about names for women isn't something that can easily pop out in one's mind, right? This is difficult." (Makoto)

"And so, Waka." (Tomoe)

"Oh, Tomoe? Did the talk on your side finish? It is pretty difficult on my side. Even if I am suddenly told to give out names..." (Makoto)

"About those names, can it be like the time with the Blue Lizards? Ones that don't look like a person's name at glance, and have some sort of uniformity in them." (Tomoe)

"? Not a person's name at glance and have uniformity?" (Makoto)

"Currently, it is because it is necessary for the Gorgons when they go outside. I would say it would be better to treat it as using aliases when going outside." (Tomoe)

"Aliases, you say. I feel like the difficulty has drastically increased though." (Makoto)

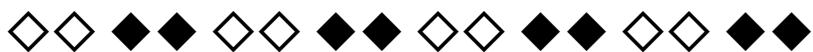
"Well then, I will be counting on you." (Tomoe)

"I am sorry for imposing this on you when you are busy, Waka-sama." (Shiki)

"Eh? What? Tomoe, Shiki?" (Makoto)

The door closes.

Makoto was agonizing for a while with his elbows on top of the desk.



Around a week passed after that.

Makoto was in the Gorgon settlement with a complicated expression.

The actual reason for that is because he lacked sleep and his complexion was

not looking good.

In front of him, there's four Gorgons.

And at the back of those Gorgons, there's an even bigger amount of Gorgons.

Everyone is gathered.

This is not a sight that's normally seen.

In contrast to the expression of Makoto, the faces of the Gorgons were filled with expectation.

"I am sorry for having you go through the trouble of coming here for our sake. But there's nothing that makes me as happy as being able to actually see this day come."

"Can we think of this as a step to going out to Tsige, Waka-sama?"

From the four Gorgons lined up in a row, the two in the middle spoke to Makoto.

"About the four that are in front of me...right. Lime did earnestly ask me of this, so I would say it is safe to assume that this is a tailwind for the Matriarch-san and the other Gorgons to leave to Tsige and Rotsgard." (Makoto)

Hearing the words of Makoto, the face of the two showed joy.

The other Gorgons were directing envy at them.

The four Gorgons there are the first ones to gain enough ability to control their petrification ability to a point that Makoto acknowledges it.

Within that group, there's the Matriarch sisters.

You could say they managed to maintain their honor there.

"But I won't allow both the Matriarch and little sister to leave outside at the same times-ja. A situation where the leaders of the race are not in Asora is not desirable." (Tomoe)

Tomoe who is slightly at the back of Makoto added this.

Tomoe, Mio, and even Shiki were there.

"Yes, I am aware of this. We currently have a mountain of things to do in

Asora after all. We increased our ability mostly because of our obstinacy due to our position. That's why these other two will be the first group to leave to the outside." (Matriarch)

"Eeh?! I can't go outside?!"

"Obviously. Are you planning on pushing all the work to me, you lady."
(Matriarch)

"Uwu... too bad. But it is true that we do have work over here as well. Can't be helped. Let's look forward to it in the future then."

"Yeah, that's how it should be." (Matriarch)

"Then, about the names that you four will be using when going to the outside..." (Makoto)

"!!!"

The casual words of Makoto had created nervousness within the Gorgons. The talk around the area also went silent.

For some reason, the three followers at the back also reacted with a twitch.

"The Matriarch-san will be Mutsuki, the Imouto-san will be Hatsuharu, the Bowl-cut lady will be Kasumi, the Wavy-hair lady will be Somezuki. That's all. They are names solely given for going outside, so I don't mind you using whichever name you want when you are in Asora." (Makoto)

"Mutsuki..."

"Hatsuharu..."

"Kasumi..."

"Somezuki..."

The Gorgons mutter their respective names as if they were seeping it into themselves.

On the other hand, the three followers at his back let out small sighs.

(I secretly proposed names for ships, but I missed huh.) (Tomoe)

(They weren't names for flowers as I predicted either. What was the thought

process?) (Shiki)

(They weren't names for sweets. Maybe this was the suggestion of Tomoe-san or Shiki?) (Mio)

"Well then, we are done. Kasumi, Somesuki; properly discuss with your Matriarch-san before reporting to us, okay? Can Tomoe and Shiki assign a detailed time and place to dispatch them to?" (Makoto)

"I will think about it." (Tomoe)

"Understood." (Shiki)

Confirming that his followers nodded, Makoto waved his hand as he left the place.

Mio was the only one who followed after him.

(Tomoe, Mio, and even Shiki made suggestions to me after all. If I were to use any one of their suggestions, it would end up as me inclining towards a specific side. It was difficult...) (Makoto)

In the end, the names Makoto gave came out from a single book of the document room.

It is not as if anyone in Asora knows of it, so Makoto placed it away inside a locked drawer just in case.

After that, Kasumi and Somezuki ended up working at Tsige, and the popularity of the Gorgons spread to the outside with those two.

As a result of this, there soon was a second group that would be named by Makoto thanks to the blow up in inquisitiveness and motivation from the Gorgons.

'I am glad I made it a book with lots of names', Makoto muttered this after the fourth group of namings was done.

Extra Story XXX: The story of a certain adventurer

The adventurers that challenge the World's Border have their own objectives.

Most are money and power, but there's some that are not like that.

As an example; the top rank adventurer of Tsige, Toa, is one of the latters.

From the bases that the Hyumans made in the wasteland, the place that was the furthest in was called Zetsuya. There, she had been pushed almost to the point where her life would be closing its curtains, and in that moment, she was saved.

After that, she has moved her base all the way to Tsige, and continues to challenge the wasteland together with her new comrades.

"This time for sure." (Toa)

At a room in the house that she had bought not that long ago with her party, Toa lets out a voice of resolve.

In the past, she was so reckless in her explorations that it looked like she was hurrying to her death, but the current her is completely different.

She is exploring with surviving as its prerequisite.

Being saved by Raidou, she changed her very way of adventuring as she gets involved with the Kuzunoha Company that he made.

The words she spoke just now were not fitting of her current self. They showed signs of her being at her wit's end.

(The exploration of the wasteland is going well. Tsige -no...even if we were to compare it to the adventurers of any base, there's no party that has achieved as much as us. That's exactly why...we have to go further than Zetsuya. Now's the time to step into the direction where Raidou-san had come from.) (Toa)

The party of Toa continued exploring the wasteland as if spreading the circle with Tsige as the center.

That circle of that exploration was already closing in on the place where Zetsuya was.

It could be said that this is the time to set an objective.

It is different from what it has been until now. It will be an exploration in a

completely unknown place, and Toa was more nervous than normal.

Even when she laid down on the bed, the nervousness in her body didn't come off a single bit.

(Further from there, there's the volcano of the Elder Dwarfs. And then, what comes after there is a complete mystery. But if I were to trust the information I have gathered until now, there's a decent chance that, further beyond, the Superior Dragon Shen will be there. And if Shen really is there...it would probably mean that I would have walked through the same path as my ancestors of long ago.) (Toa)

The reason why Toa challenges the wasteland is because she is searching for the dagger that her ancestors had lost.

A blue dagger.

Rather than calling it the reason she challenges the wasteland, it is more like the reason why she became an adventurer.

It is a dagger made from a special stone that has a transparency as if see-through. The story of it is passed down in the family of Toa as an excelling weapon and catalyst of magic.

The blade and the handle was worked on delicately, and it was said to be used in the temple formalities.

Just that Toa herself hasn't seen the actual object.

With only that information at hand, she entered the wasteland with dagger in hand, and finally, she reached the footsteps of her ancestors that didn't return.

Bringing her only relative that is her little sister Rinon.

(The me from that time, now that I think about it, lived quite in the spur of the moment. If I hadn't met Raidou-san, this life would have been over after all. Right, if I can safely recover the dagger from the wasteland...it wouldn't be bad to live in this town. I already bought a house after all.) (Toa)

After being brought back by Raidou to Tsige, she made a party with the people that were in the same circumstances of Zetsuya.

Everyone had different objectives, but even when they have already reached

those objectives, everyone's still tagging along with Toa's objective.

Toa is grateful for that.

That's why, after her objective is fulfilled, if everyone feels the same way, she would like it if everyone were to live in Tsige as adventurers and contribute to the town.

Even if this was their original base of operations, even if they are a party, adventurers having a house is rare.

At the very least, there's no doubt that Toa and her comrades hold favourable emotions towards Tsige.

(Let's go. This time around will be two weeks.) (Toa)

Toa stood up and takes off her house clothes.

She gets dressed in her battle equipment with familiar movements.

Toa was equipping several things that would cost enough to buy several houses, carries the luggage she had already arranged before, and left her own room that's in the second floor.

She looks down to the first floor, and in the widely made entrance, her comrades were already there.

"This time is two weeks, right? We are prepared." (Hazal)

"Hazal." (Toa)

Toa noticed the presence of the only male in the group that's tasked with the role of supporting and healing.

Because the blessing of the Goddess works more effectively with females, it is more normal to see high level female adventurers or knights.

A male adventurer in a high level party would have been impossible to consider ages ago, but in around these ten years, the situation has changed greatly.

Now, there's males that are high ranked or high leveled doing great achievements as well.

It is proof that, if you don't rely on the blessing of the Goddess, there's no

discrimination between male and female adventurers.

Toa nodded at the words of the man, and after going down the stairs, she arrived to where the others are.

“It would be nice if we were to find it this time around.” (Ranina)

“Thanks, Ranina.” (Toa)

“No need to worry. We have information till where the Elder Dwarf village is. Don’t make such a tense expression.” (Ranina)

“Yeah. We are truly being saved by the Kuzunoha Company.” (Toa)

The next one to speak out is a female dwarf.

She is the smallest in the party, but she has a firm body build.

Her equipment is that of a high class warrior, and she is also the one who has the most luggage.

Her tone is mature. It sounds more like that of an elder person, and yet, she has a childish face which leaves quite the impression.

Ranina is a warrior that worships the earth spirit and arrived to this land for training.

She has already done plenty enough training, so she can return to her homeland whenever she wants, but in order to help Toa, she is staying in Tsige.

The alcoholic beverages that gather from many places due to the circulation of goods prospering in Tsige is also an objective of hers, but there’s no doubt that she is an ascetic warrior that treasures her comrades.

“The medicine and preserved food has all been prepared at the Kuzunoha Company. Well, it is the basics to procure at the location, but it is enough for any unexpected situations.” (Luisa)

“Luisa. Sorry about that. Even though we found the settlement of the Forest Onis, we still had you tag along with us.” (Toa)

“I didn’t think it would be in such a close place though. Even so, if I didn’t have the help of Toa and the others, I wouldn’t have been able to achieve it. Then, it is a matter of course that I would help those comrades. Don’t worry

about it." (Luisa)

"Are you done with the reports?" (Toa)

"Of course. I have already contacted them that I would be staying for around ten years in this town. Count on me for this time and for the ones that come after." (Luisa)

"...Thanks." (Toa)

The one who reported to Toa regarding the luggage was an elf girl.

Just as an elf would be, she has a tall slender figure, and has a bow on her back.

Unlike usual elfs who normally take a certain distance towards hyumans, she spoke with a voice filled with friendliness.

Even when she is at the side of a dwarf, that are considered to be in a cat and dog relationship with the elves, she is still showing a smile.

The objective of Luisa was to confirm the existence of the ancient elves that left the forest and headed to the wasteland because of the different path they wanted to take; the Forest Onis.

They found their settlement in a place that was not far from Tsige, and the objective of Luisa had been achieved for the time being.

Not only that, the Kuzunoha Company that is currently in Tsige has Forest Onis working as their employees.

In other words, she has no reason to be in Tsige or to be an adventurer anymore, but even with that, she is still working together with Toa as an adventurer.

It might also be because living in a hyuman settlement that overflows with stimulus was appealing to her.

But it is just as she said, it weighed heavily on the fact that she wants to help out Toa.

She is still young as an elf and has a flexible thinking in regards to interacting with hyumans and other races which might have led to this sort of decision.

“Onee-chan, be careful, okay? No need to worry about me, so keep safety as your priority, okay?” (Rinon)

“Of course. I can’t die and leave Rinon alone. Right now, I can actually use my onee-chan power, so it is okay.” (Toa)

“O-Onee-chan power?” (Rinon)

“I was taught that by Raidou-san. I will return for your sake as well Rinon, so do your best in getting better at drawing. Don’t go fighting with Komoe-chan, okay?” (Toa)

“There’s no way I would fight with Komoe. We are best friends after all. Also, this. The guild said to give it a look.” (Rinon)

“Okay. Then, I will be going now.” (Toa)

“Have a safe trip. You will be returning in a month, right?” (Rinon)

“According to the plan, that is!” (Toa)

The four adventurers begin to walk.

They will show up at the Kuzunoha Company, and then, head to the gate of the wasteland.

That’s currently their usual route.

Depending on what’s necessary, their route when entering the wasteland can change.

The Adventurer Guild already knows the address of Toa’s party, so when there’s direct requests and matters that they are troubled in solving, cases where the guild would personally go to them instead have grown more frequent.

Toa’s sister, Rinon, has already gotten used to dealing with the staff of the Adventurer Guild, and in essence, she is acting as the secretary of Toa’s party.

“Hello~!!” (Toa)

“Oya, Toa. You are leaving today?”

“Yes! We came here thinking that we could be of help with something.” (Toa)

Since the time they acted temporarily together with Tomoe, Toa and the others are now able to practically move around the wasteland on their own strength.

Even so, they still feel deeply indebted to the Kuzunoha Company and Raidou, and have pledged in their hearts to pay them someday.

Every time they leave to the wasteland, they always show themselves at the Kuzunoha Company to see if they can be of help.

Even when they are not asked to, they would speak about what they have gotten in the wasteland and the information they have gotten.

They have made a deep connection.

The first interaction of Toa's party when entering the Kuzunoha Company would normally be with an Elder Dwarf, and in this case, it was also the same.

"No real need. Waka-sama has left from Rotsgard and we haven't seen him for a while now. This time you are going to be heading even further from the village that you were living in before, right?"

"Yeah." (Toa)

"Be careful. Sorry for not being able to help with the dagger that you are searching for."

"Oh no, just the fact that you have given us information of the area is already plenty. Please look forward to some souvenirs." (Toa)

"Good grief. I told you to be careful, I didn't tell you to be considerate, you know?"

"The Kuzunoha Company has taken great care of us after all. If Raidou-san weren't there for us, we wouldn't be standing here." (Toa)

"He saved your lives, or so I heard?"

"There's also that, but the current exploration style of the wasteland is basically something that we were able to obtain thanks to Raidou-san." (Toa)

"...Ah, the expedition style and the alpi-something, right?"

"The alpine style." (Toa)

Toa complements the words of the Elder Dwarf that he didn't remember clearly.

"The mountain climbing techniques of Waka-sama's country. Now that I think about it, you were asking about it in a strangely interested manner."

At a certain time, when Raidou had shown himself at the store of Tsige, Toa and the others were coincidentally there and had a conversation like that; the Elder Dwarf was also there.

'Why do they use so much technique just to reach the top of a mountain?', that's the kind of question the dwarf had, but he just thought about it without saying it.

On the other hand, Toa's party had their eyes change and were concentrated in the conversation. Rather than the contents of the conversation, he was more impressed by that state of them.

"I have never heard of a country that gets so involved in mountain climbing, but I didn't think that it would be so useful in the wasteland. Well, now that I think about it, the wasteland is like a giant mountain with no peak at sight."

(Toa)

Toa nods as she looks back at that time.

"If I remember correctly, the use of a big amount of people and goods while making several bases to aim for the peak with carefully selected members is the expedition style."

"Yes. And the alpine style is the one where you use your own strength to climb all the way up with speed as its main point." (Toa)

"It would mean that the current system in the wasteland is the expedition style."

"That's right. But the results are showing. Our current limit is Zetsuya." (Toa)

"Then, that means Toa's party is using the alpine style?"

"Yes. Putting importance in one's own strength, reduce the equipment, and put speed as main focus, is what Raidou-san said too, but it also has the disadvantage that it is weak to unexpected situations. It is not suited for long

time stays after all.” (Toa)

“Fumu.”

“The wasteland has a decent amount of goods and there’s a good amount of mamonos that can serve as food when we dive. I thought it was a plenty viable method by grasping the locations and resupplying in the actual place. In long term stays, there’s currently existing bases, so there’s the option of using those too.” (Toa)

“Dive?”

“Lately, we have gotten used to calling our outings to the wasteland as diving. That’s also something that Raidou-san said before. At any rate, by using one’s own strength as main and concentrating at all times, use your all to move forward and deal with things as they happen while heading deeper. And then, don’t ponder too deeply and just think of the journey and the return as a single route.” (Toa)

“Is that the so called awareness as the top ranker?”

“Now that you mention it, we have, at some point in time, taken the top four spots of the guild. I don’t really pay mind to it though.” (Toa)

“Oho, big words there. But with that mindset, there’s no worries of lowering your guard huh. If you are going to be diving, make sure to return alive to Tsige. Don’t make your family cry.”

“...Okay! Well then, we will be going!” (Toa)

Toa’s party lowers their head and leave the Kuzunoha Company.

Since the company is renting a room, the party also exited the Rembrandt Company as they headed towards the wasteland.

“Good grief... I thought they were chicks, but their levels have now surpassed 700. They are beginning to get a sense of presence already.”

A monologue as if nostalgic had come out from the mouth of the Elder Dwarf.



“This is...the dwelling of a dragon...”

“This...it looks like a pretty strong dragon lived here.”

“Right now it is absent. No, it isn’t living here anymore.”

“Can’t say for certain, but the chances it was Shen are high.”

Day 11 of the exploration.

Toa’s party had gone even deeper than Zetsuya, passed by even the volcano the Elder Dwarfs live in, and arrived at a certain mountain.

When they advanced for a while crossing the decayed gate that’s in the entrance of the mountain, there was a cave that continued on to the inside of the mountain.

There was a spacious room deep inside.

At that place, there’s a part of the dragon scattered about.

All of them were old scales or fangs that had been shed to grow new ones. They were not from fighting, but things that happened naturally.

There wasn’t a single place where you could see ‘the remains of battle’.

If there was some sort of violent fight before, there should be remains left, but there was no such thing here.

“There was no battle? Or maybe the dragon repaired it? No, I don’t think a Superior Dragon would do something like that. But this place has the atmosphere that something has been living here for a long time.” (Toa)

People say that even the excrement of a dragon is a treasure.

If within that, it is from a Superior Dragon, any part of its body can turn out huge profit.

In other words, Toa’s party is currently in a mountain of treasure.

There may not be many, but the scales and fangs of a Superior Dragon are scattered around after all.

In reality, what was left there were the remains of when Tomoe had cleaned up. She left them there since she didn’t care about it, but the sense of worth of a dragon and that of a hyuman are completely different.

The past dwelling of Shen, for an adventurer, it definitely would look like shining gold.

Toa had a heavy tone, but the other three comrades of hers were clearly excited and collecting the scales and fangs as they are on guard of the surroundings.

“We won’t know if these are from Shen until we check it at Tsige, but wouldn’t this be called an achievement at the very least?” (Ranina)

Ranine was looking at Toa and waited for her words.

“...Yeah. I am thinking of using this place as the center of investigation. We still have time, so I am thinking about continuing for a little bit more. Is that okay?” (Toa)

“Of course. If this is truly Shen, then one fang would give us a surplus of money. And even if it isn’t, there’s no doubt it is a strong dragon, that’s plenty enough. We still have leeway in our consumables. We would need to mix a bit more, but there’s no problem with the medicine part either.” (Hazal)

“We will be using this place as a starting point next time after all. Understood.” (Luisa)

Hazal and Luisa return an approval to Toa’s opinion.

Everyone was unharmed.

A party of only four has reached all the way to Shen’s dwelling and still have strength left. A few years ago, that would have been unthinkable.

This is one of the changes that Raidou’s existence has brought about.

“You guys... Then, let’s rest here for today and then advance tomorrow.” (Toa)

Obtaining something that clearly might be a clue, Toa decides on the next plan with a cheerful tone.

“Can you please wait?”

“?!”

Suddenly, a voice reverberates in the area.

It was not something that came from anyone of the party, so Toa and the others increase their guard to max.

“Well done coming all the way here.”

Aside from the four inside the big space deep in the cave, there’s no other presence.

The four were aware of this, and it was something they confirmed several times.

But a voice still reverberated.

And the first one to notice the owner of that voice was Toa.

“There!” (Toa)

Toa releases a throwing knife with the intention of intimidating.

It pierces close to the feet of the owner of the voice exactly as she aimed.

The shockwave that was created from that knife attacked the owner of the voice and the ‘whole’ figure of it shook.

“I am not an enemy, Adventurer-dono.”

“...Who are you?” (Toa)

The guard of Toa didn’t lower at all.

The four had already entered battle stance and had finished taking their formation.

“Let’s just say...I am the remains of someone who challenged the dragon living in this land.”

“!!”

“Let me ask here as well. Is the objective of you people the Superior Dragon Shen?”

The human-shaped white haze speaks.

“...”

“If that’s the case, the previously mentioned dragon is already not here, and it is also not in the wasteland anymore. It would most likely be impossible to

search for it."

"We have no intention of subjugating Shen. We have no intentions of challenging a Superior Dragon. I simply have business with the memento of my ancestors that challenged that dragon." (Toa)

Toa answered without lying.

That was exactly how she felt, and she had no interest in the glory of killing a dragon.

"...Is that the truth?"

"Yeah." (Toa)

"...I will trust that. In that case, I welcome you, adventurers. Please give us a proper parting."

"Parting?! So there is one, right?! Somewhere close to here, there's a place where Shen has battled, right?!" (Toa)

"It is not close, but there's definitely a place. If you hear out my request, I will tell you the place."

"Give you guys a proper burial, right? Does it also entail returning the articles of the deceased to their respective families?" (Toa)

"There's no need to be so thorough about it. We were people that challenged the dragon ourselves and were killed. Our deaths were brought upon by no other but ourselves."

"..."

"But there were some within us that didn't think that way. Sadly, those have ended up becoming undead. I said 'proper parting', but it is okay to just return those guys to the earth."

"So it is an undead extermination?" (Toa)

"It wouldn't be much different from that. How about it? I will pay you in advance with information of that place you wanted to know about, and the deferred payment you will have to gain by yourselves at the actual location."

"...Just what I want. We accept that request." (Toa)

Toa glanced at her three comrades and confirms their decision.

She decided on accepting the suspicious request of the human-shaped spirit that she was listening carefully to.

“Thanks. Well then, I will tell you the place where we have died. I pray from the bottom of my heart that you can arrive at that place...”

The haze dimmed, and disappeared.

Right after, a part of the wall crumbled and, in that small gouged out space, there was a crumpled scrap of paper.

“Toa.”

“Yeah, I will go get it.” (Toa)

Being cautious of traps, Toa approaches it and, after a while of caution, she stretched her hand and obtained the paper.

When she returned to where her comrades are and opens it, a drawn map came to view. It showed the area around, and there was an easy to understand X marked in it.

“It must be there.” (Toa)

“...It kind of feels like it has turned into a treasure hunt.” (Hazal)

Hazal was keeping down his excitement, and said this pretending he was composed.

What he said sounded like a joke, but his eyes were shining.

“The scaling is a mess, so only the direction can be relied on. It would be bad if we hurry.” (Luisa)

Luisa confirms the map and voiced out a precaution.

Ranina also nodded at the side.

“I know. There’s still time till our planned return, but it is okay to not arrive at that location in this occasion. Let’s go with care.” (Toa)

Toa’s composed words were answered with a nod from the three.

That night was a specially long one for them, even if it is the wasteland.



16th day of the exploration.

The four had encountered a situation that they didn't expect at all.

The direction was certainly correct, and yet, there was no progress.

Not only that, they were getting agitated by the days that were literally 'nothing happening'.

That place is close to where Raidou -Misumi Makoto-had been thrown to by the Goddess.

Toa's party were being baptized by that place too. They were feeling just like how he felt.

The wasteland is an incredibly dangerous place where one can't know what might happen at the next instant.

The climate is also a mess and the things living there are even more of a mess.

As long as the group doesn't clean up the place and deploys a barrier, there's basically no place where one can rest there.

And yet, after leaving the mountain that's most likely the dwelling of Shen, in the time they were heading to the marked location in the map...nothing happened.

The climate was as harsh as always, but not only were there no violent living beings, there weren't any living beings at all in sight.

It was just a space where dry land was dancing wildly with the wind.

It is barren, but that's all it has been since a while now.

For Toa's party who have explored the wasteland for a long time, they have never had such an 'abnormal' wasteland experience.

There might be nothing in sight, but because this is truly untrdden land, they are always at max caution and their pace has decreased slightly.

If one realizes that there's nothing, travelling through such a place would normally be fast paced and there would be no need to be so cautious. But in reality, even if it is a place where there's nothing, the fatigue will accumulate

almost the same way and the pace won't increase.

Even when the day to return has already passed, Toa's party tried persevering for a bit more, but they were close to their limit already.

"...This is as far as we can go. Let's return this time around." (Toa)

"It is regrettable, but it can't be helped. Hurrying things doesn't bring anything good. That reality has been seeped deep in our bodies already after all." (Luisa)

Luisa agreed plainly at Toa's declaration.

"..."

Hazal simply nodded silently.

"Next time, if it is the same as now, we might have to consider increasing our speed to gain the distance at once." (Ranina)

Ranina mutters the lesson of this time.

"Just learning about the place is already a big harvest. Next time, let's prepare with undead countermeasures in mind when we go... This time, this is as far as we go!" (Toa)

Toa once again speaks out words that reflect their return as she promptly turns around.

The feeling of wanting to advance further was swirling inside of her, but impatience won't bring about anything and simply takes away. Toa understands this and bit her lip to suppress that emotion of hers.

(I have obtained a clue of the place. Even if, at worst, it is a trap, I want to cling to it. As long as I obtain the dagger, my objective will finish. The days where I can truly live as an 'adventurer' is close.) (Toa)

For Toa, this time's exploration had big progress.

After sixteen days.

They had increased their level quite a lot when they returned safely to Tsige, and their names increased in fame by even more.



At that time...

“Fumu. Looks like they have finally arrived at the quest that I set up-ja no. With this, we can finally do the ‘return the dagger’ that Waka requested me of. Oi, Shiki. Release a decent amount of undeads. It is that kind of setting after all.” (Tomoe)

“I have already done it. With Tomoe-dono’s memories as a reference, I have placed around 60 mid and high rank undeads. And I have also set it so that they can rot the mamonos of the wasteland to create lower ones.” (Shiki)

“As expected-ja na. Well, in the past, there was a mere subjugation team of around a hundred people that tried to challenge me, but by using Asora, I one-sidedly killed them all, so we can create as many different settings as we want. We have to trouble Toa as much as possible before having her obtain that dagger.” (Tomoe) <Remember Asora was actually an attack of hers>

“It was quite the good article. The maze has been finished by the Elder Dwarfs and the others, so we have already buried it there.” (Shiki)

“So the stage and the cast is already in perfect condition huh. Now then, Toa, show us a great play.” (Tomoe)

Such a suspicious conversation was taking place in a part of Asora.

Extra Story XXXI: Asora’s currency was born in this way

“...This truly is an interesting arrangement through and through.”

Asora, the mansion of Misumi Makoto.

The demon girl that had experienced a drastic change in social standing not long ago, Sari, was groaning at the personal room she was given.

She is a direct relative of the Demon Lord, but without any of that connection affecting the result, she had shown talent and obtained the right of being one of the Demon Lord candidates.

At the same time, she is also the girl that was in close proximity to being the next in the throne and was instantly thrown right down to being the slave of a hyuman.

The room she is in is around 12 tatamis in size. It is a lot smaller than the room she was in the past.

In Asora, or more like, in the house of Makoto specifically, the personal rooms are not very big.

Maybe because of his taste as a japanese, he thinks that even the twelve tatami rooms are too big as well.

Thinking about the standing of Makoto and his assets in this world as a standard, his personal room should be more than twice bigger than what it currently is, and it is normal for the private room size to be sixty tatamis or more.

But Makoto only has one place in Asora that can be called his room. There's a big bookshelf that reaches the ceiling which was one of the secret dreams of Makoto, and the thing that bothers him the most is the bed that is steadily being changed to be bigger and bigger.

The whole room doesn't have any artistic articles and luxurious furnitures. It is a simple room to the core.

It would be normal for Makoto's personality, but it isn't fitting for Makoto's standing.

It is a room that one tell how sudden his change in environment was.

In a sense, Sari lived a more jet coaster life than Makoto, but she actually wasn't too pessimistic.

Maybe she has high adaptability, or it might be that she simply gave up and accepted it.

At any rate, Sari, rather than worrying about her pointless future (or so she thinks herself), she was more interested in the four types of currency that were lined up on the desk in front of her.

"This is one mon, this is one shu, this is one bu...and the last one is one ryo. In

basis, four of each would be equal to one of the higher rank, but the only exception is the mon that needs 250 mons to be worth one shu..... This is truly complicated. Not only do they use the secret writing that Lorel uses, they also use calculations that I can't get and it is an incredible pain. On top of that, what's surprising is that almost all the residents understand how to use these. In other words, this means that the people that live here are able to perform such calculations in a daily basis. That would also set the standard of knowledge in this place at that bar, so... No good, my head hurts." (Sari) <

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Japanese_mon_\(currency\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Japanese_mon_(currency))

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Sari was groaning in regards to the currency of Asora.

Demons and hyumans used a different currency before, but in the present, they mostly use the same one.

It was the result of the demons matching the hyuman currency, and the reason for it was by no means a peaceful one.

And so, Sari learned of the past currency of the demons, the hyuman currency, and the system behind it as well as understood it.

But in the place that Misumi Makoto had brought her didn't use either of those and had a complicated and bizarre currency.

Even the position of the stars is completely different. It is a different world that no one knows where is located, so it could be said that this is a matter of course though.

But even now that she has properly learned the way of using the currency, the worth, and the prices of commodities, she was thoroughly surprised by the true shape of the Kuzunoha Company.

"The mon to the bu are used in daily life. The ryo is a special unit, so I can exclude it. Thinking of it in that way, the bu being the one who sees the most regular use makes it easier in a sense. But why are there four types? And it is not as if the sizes get steadily bigger... The most mysterious thing is that the more I use them, the more I simply get used to it." (Sari)

The word 'used' made her face loosen into a smile.

At first, this was a land where she didn't know a single person, but in this Asora, she has gotten involved with the society, and has begun to make acquaintances and friends.

It was a smile brought by her memories of that.

It couldn't be helped that Sari would get flustered by everything.

The currency of Asora was something that wasn't established by Makoto, but Tomoe who begged on her knees to Makoto because of her edo period influence.

It is obvious that a parallel world wouldn't be familiar with it, and even in Asora which is mostly composed of residents of the wasteland, it could be said to be something terrifyingly different.

In the first place, Asora is a place that could suffice with trading goods to fill almost all their needs.

The basis of Tomoe was that there would be guys in Asora that will be going outside in the near future and they would need knowledge in how to use money. Makoto then said that if that's the case, then why not just use the hyuman currency in Asora as well which was a rare decent rebuttal of him, and yet, faced a crushing defeat.

The initial introduction of the currency was despairing.

The reason that the mon currency of the edo period is still used as the main currency in Asora is because of the tenacity of Tomoe.

In the end, Makoto, who is soft with his friends, was pushed by Tomoe even when he knew that having a different currency in Asora held no merit.

But in reality, there's meaning in having a currency unique to them.

There are many cases where people would grow dependant on the currency of foreign countries.

The demons may have the same currency as hyumans externally, but a part of them continue holding their own currency which dampens the problem a bit.

But these various problems that Makoto couldn't think of didn't have much meaning in this case.

Asora won't grow dependant on the outside, and the currency movement is only when Makoto and the others bring it into Asora which is a one-sided thing.

At the very least, there's no demerit in using the same currency as the outside.

Rather, it would be just as Makoto says. It would be less troublesome to introduce an already existing system. The merits in it are more.

In the first place, for Makoto who knows about the mon to the ryo, and the silver units used in the Kansei prefecture, and also a rough knowledge on the money order of that era, it wasn't that much of a problem for him, so that may have been of help to Tomoe.

It was a strange situation where Makoto's liking to edo came to use.

The next plausible argument Makoto gave out was to use the modern era currency that's paper money which is easier to carry around, but was brushed away with the flawless reason of 'it lacks taste'.

Those were the details behind the currency of Asora. It was truly logic losing and pushing winning.

"One ryo is 4,000 mon, but the truly mysterious part of this place's money is the ryo. Because ryo is not money used to buy things." (Sari)

Of course, in the edo period, one ryo and two ryo were a normal unit of money.

It would be slightly troubling to do shopping with ryo, but it was still possible.

But in Asora, it is different.

The highest value that is the ryo can't be used to buy goods.

What the ryo does is special exchanges.

With ryo, you can make requests to people in standings that are lower than Makoto and his followers -in other words, practically everyone in Asora.

With one ryo, you can enter the archive of Makoto's memories where the

lowest ranked ones are located; this comprises things like flora and fauna. With five ryo, instead of doing the job assigned to you based on your specialty and race, you can choose a job you would like to experience for a limited time, and depending on your results in that time, you could even change the job you have; because of this, the restriction of jobs and standings can be slightly bent.

Of course, even when one obtains knowledge that is not open publicly, spreading it has its restrictions, and putting it to practice also requires another permission to use.

If the person doesn't manage to get suitable results in the job that they wanted, they are returned to their previous job, so it isn't as if money can bend all rules.

By the way, with 20 ryo, you can have a mock battle with whichever follower you want, and have them train you. With a hundred ryo, you can have a mock battle with Makoto.

Something that one wouldn't even be able to wish for unless you are in the high parts of the Asora ranking -or the highest-it is made possible as long as you save the money.

But well, there hasn't been a single soul who has challenged Makoto.

There has been precedent of the race amassing the money they have to have a mock battle and training with the followers though.

"The act of amassing the wealth of many people was seen as a foolish thing in the society I lived in before, and how to say it, it simply wasn't realistic." (Sari)

Sari is gaining pay for the work she is given.

It is still a minuscule amount, but there's enough to put in her savings.

She doesn't have a reason or has decided on a way to use it, but she isn't able to use all the money she is given within seven days of work, which is mostly due to Sari's own nature.

Sari has the habit of preparing for if anything happens.

In her current situation where her meals are basically free of charge, moreover, she is enslaved to Makoto, if he were to ask her for her money, she

would have no choice but to comply, so it could be said that it is pointless to save money.

Even with that, the amount in her savings was increasing every week.

It really must be her nature.

For now, she was lightly thinking about inspecting the memories Tomoe and Mio were enjoying so much when she manages to save two ryos.

“This is my personal opinion. It is easier to carry mons by tying them with a string, and regarding the place where exchange of the currency can be done...”
(Sari)

She was looking at the currency as she sketches the shape of them in a notebook and writes down an explanation and her own thoughts about it.

The other coins aside from the mons were things that Sari requested of Makoto to lend her by telling him that she needed them for studying.

He easily agreed and took out the money from a wallet that seemed to not see much use which confused Sari, but she was not about to complain about a result she wished for.

She obediently gave her thanks and borrowed it.

“...With this, it should be fine.” (Sari)

Why is it that Sari does something like this.

That's because this is for her to study and this is her creating a textbook for it.

Since the time she was ordered by Makoto to move the race named Lorelai to the ocean, she has ended up joining the conversations of other sea races, and also the talks about the structures that are planned to be built at the seashore.

Within that, Sari felt that the sea races really needed to understand the unique currency that's already being used in Asora, so she was studying the currency again.

After finishing her work of the day and her meal, she would return to her room and that's where her free time begins until morning comes.

She is not reprimanded for using the lights at night, and there's water and tea

in her own room for when she is thirsty.

It is truly a blessed environment, a way too blessed environment for a slave.

Thinking of that, Sari's mouth changed into a smile.

But that expression soon returns to that of when she is pondering about something. Eyes that were as if she were staring into space.

"Now that I think about it, each mon has a delicate making, and on top of that, it is made of an unknown alloy. It doesn't rust, doesn't break, and duplication magic is not allowed at all. In regards to the duplication, the containers were also the same... Just how much does it cost to make one of this?" (Sari)

By nature, the tools that the sea races use have to take into consideration the ocean water and the sea breeze.

When she remembered that she had to tell them that there's no need to worry about the currency rusting, a question had surfaced in her mind.

Even the coin that has the lowest value -no matter how you look at it-takes more time and work to make than the worth of it.

It was clear that the production cost didn't match.

Sari was trying to silently deduce what the hidden intentions of Makoto, Tomoe, and their group are.

Of course, there's no hidden intentions.

If there's one, it would simply be the attachment Tomoe has with her hobby.

It was an answer that anyone could easily tell that she would lose all strength when she learns about it.

Sari, who was sunk deep in the sea of her thoughts, lifted her head suddenly as if she had noticed something, and just like that, she looked at the entrance.

She felt the presence of someone approaching.

Two people that are not showing signs of trying to hide. Sari could tell that they were clearly heading to her room.

Since there was absolutely no hostility coming from them, she silently closed

her notebook, checked her own appearance, and opened the door on her own to welcome the two guests.

“Tomoe-sama and Komoe-sama. What a surprise. Is there anything I can help you with?” (Sari)

“Umu. I heard from Shiki that you are learning about the currency for the sake of the sea people.” (Tomoe)

“Good evening, Sari.” (Komoe)

Sari was surprised at the visit of Tomoe, and Komoe, who was explained to her that she is the special familiar of Tomoe.

There's almost no occasions where these two get involved with Sari.

Hearing that the business had to do with the currency, Sari's body slightly stiffened.

It was something that Sari did while aware that it wasn't anything to be reprimanded for, but she began to look back on her actions to see if she did something bad somewhere.

But she couldn't find anything.

She was moving as much as possible under permission, and she wasn't hiding what she was doing.

That's why, for now, Sari decided on waiting for Tomoe to speak, so she maintained silence.

“...I am truly impressed-ja. I have come here to tell you to continue on like that. Komoe for some reason asked to come along, so I simply allowed her to do as she pleases-ja.” (Tomoe)

“Thank you very much. I am planning on studying about the currency in these days taking in mind the other races that are yet to come to this land as well.” (Sari)

“How exemplar-ja na. Waka and us have a lot of work to do so we have a hard time to look after them. We will be counting on you.” (Tomoe)

“I will do my best to answer those expectations.” (Sari)

Tomoe nods a number of times in satisfaction at the words of Sari.

Maybe her business was finished after hearing those words, Tomoe turned around and left.

Sari lowered her head deeply and saw her off.

But Tomoe turned her head back for a bit.

"Ah, right. I forgot to tell you something. About the town at the sea, we decided on using silver." (Tomoe)

"? Silver?" (Sari)

Unable to understand what Tomoe was saying, Sari unconsciously repeated what she said.

With the word silver, she could think of a number of things, but she knew that none of them would be the correct answer for what Tomoe is thinking.

"I say silver, but it is just a convenient way to call it. It is not actually silver. If I had to put it in simpler terms...it is to divide the currency more. I decided on having them try the kan,

momme

, and the mons. I have already received Waka's approval with his 'sigh, just do as you wish'. Shiki said that you are the one in charge after all. So I came to tell you this beforehand." (Tomoe)

"...Eh?" (Sari)

To be more precise, what Makoto gave to Tomoe wasn't exactly his approval...

It was more like he just gave up.

But it isn't a mistake to say that it can still be considered as him giving his approval.

In the first place, the main cause of this scary statement of Tomoe came from Makoto mistaking the currency used in Edo and Osaka. The information of ryo being used by the commoners as a currency in their daily life and that there's more cases of the ryo being exchanged in order to use them for things that are

not of daily use were mixed when Makoto told Tomoe about it. This was the cause of the blank space created in the head of Sari. <Honestly, not sure of the accuracy in this paragraph. Because I myself am as lost as Sari.>

“Tomorrow, I will be sending you the information regarding this together with the exchange rate of the momme to ryo. Do your best.” (Tomoe)

In the time of the edo period, there was already a system to keep the balance in place, but it would be hard to adopt that practice in Asora exactly as it is.

Tomoe noticed this as she heard the explanation of Makoto. And after implicitly asking Makoto about how much would be good for the ryo exchange, he answered the consultation of hers.

To the misfortune of Sari, Makoto is incredibly bountiful in the amount of memories in regards to a specific part of the japanese history.

This time for sure, Tomoe left.

Leaving Sari who had her head completely blanked out.

“...Eh?” (Sari)

By the time Tomoe was already gone without the possibility of her responding to Sari, Sari once again voiced out an ‘eh?’ from her mouth.

It was a sight worth pitying.

“It looks like they are going to change something? Waka-sama told Tomoe-sama to do whatever she wishes. Ah Sari, how old are you?” (Komoe)

“I see, so I am the Onee-chan here. And so, Sari, I am going to go to Tsige the day after tomorrow. What do you want as a souvenir? I am the Onee-chan, so I will buy it for you! Ah, I heard this from Shiki. You rode on that fast boat that has a screw attached to it, right? How was it? Ah...and also...” (Komoe)

“When Sari can leave to the outside, let’s go to Tsige. My best friend is there. I am sure Sari will also like her!” (Komoe)

Komoe was incredibly interested in Sari. She was throwing a topic after another to Sari with a wide smile.

But Sari was still shuddering at the scary words of Tomoe, and half of what

Komoe was saying wasn't entering her head.

She somehow managed to give some slight responses to her, but she couldn't remember properly.

But even with that, the impression Komoe had of her might have been good, because after that, Komoe and Sari got along better at mach speed, and every time the topic goes to their first meeting, Sari would remember it as the 'time of the kan and momme' and would always make a pained expression as she spoke.

Extra Story XXXII: A day with Shiki

One of the followers that has made a contract with Misumi Makoto, Shiki.

Within the three followers of Makoto, he is a pretty eccentric one.

And his days are pretty hectic too.

"It is morning already huh..." (Shiki)

Seeing the line of sunshine coming in from a part of the room, he stops his hand and mutters this.

Shiki's room is at the first floor of Makoto's house.

Its size is around sixty tatami mats.

It is properly arranged, but the amount of books and documents are many, and there are a variety of shelves and cases, making the room not feel as if it were that big.

It has basically turned into a research room, so the amount of people coming and going from there are more than that of Tomoe and Mio.

"It didn't advance as much as planned. To think I still can't grasp my own strength yet. No good." (Shiki)

A slight wrinkle was made in between his eyebrows.

In the paper that he was holding, there's a paper that has clearly written

details of his own abilities.

13th steps.

It is a power that awakened in Shiki when he made a pact with Makoto.

“The first to fourth are strengthening of the basic abilities; the fifth is healing and regeneration; the sixth is close combat battle prowess solely for swords; the seventh is an absorption technique on the level of ritual magic; the eighth is a three step sealing spell; the ninth one gives me the ability to employ my shadow; and...” (Shiki)

Confirming his own descriptions, Shiki moved his eyes to what was next, and then, fell silent.

The 13th steps are just as the name states, thirteen different abilities.

At the very least, that's how Shiki himself has interpreted it.

The pulse of Makoto's rings that were taken into Shiki's body at the time of the pact was something that he felt later, and after he investigated it, the 13th steps were born.

Currently, Shiki can only use five of them freely. Only until the fifth step.

The other powers are simply cases when he managed to activate them, and in terms of the whole picture of the 13th steps, it is practically unclear.

That's why Shiki makes it a daily activity to research his abilities, and the missions from Makoto and his duties in Asora, he does his best in completing them in the intervals of his work at the Kuzunoha Company.

Since making a pact with Makoto, he hasn't taken a proper sleep aside from naps.

“It is great that my body doesn't need much sleep. The moment I gained a flesh body, I thought I would need to fight with my need to sleep, but it looks like it can handle unreasonableness like when I was a lich. I can somehow activate the tenth step, but with a condition. The eleventh's effect would weaken in activation. And I can't even grasp the identity of the twelfth step. The thirteenth one requires way too much magic power in activation, so I simply can't even touch it.” (Shiki)

Shiki makes a bitter smile.

Compared to the growth and power of Tomoe and Mio, the power of Shiki is pretty generic and also a complicated one.

He was saved by the thirteen rings in the time of the pact, and just from seeing that one point, Shiki could feel how much of a small existence he is compared to those two.

But, putting aside the scale, having a pact with an undead can be categorized as a pretty rare case in history.

In the first place, undead are existences that abhor the living, and even Shiki, who was a lich that didn't turn into one because of a grudge, had at some point in time hatred for the living corroding his heart.

His blind devotion for research which was the reason for him to turn into a lich was also a heavy factor as to why he would hate a ruling pact with someone.

Even if he exploited the fact that he had a body and mind that didn't need sleep, it is plenty rare a case for a mere undead as Shiki to be turning into an existence that can 'fight' against the Tomoe who was a Superior Dragon, and the Black Spider that was classified as a calamity in the world.

Leaving aside whether this is good or bad, being involved deeply with Misumi Makoto will always lead to one's common sense changing.

The place that Shiki is aiming for seriously by grasping his current strength, his past self would have snorted at it and considered it as being delusional.

"Now then, let's wrap up the work." (Shiki)

Shiki cracks his neck and loosens his body with a few stretches.

He takes a number of files from the orderly desk and left the room.

He enters a building located in the residence with unhesitant steps, checks the growth of the plants, and listens to the reports of the subordinates using thought transmission regarding the new plants and animals that were found in their explorations.

While at it, he gives them the instructions of the day and cuts off the thought

transmission.

“Good morning, Shiki-sama.”

“Good morning.” (Shiki)

Next, he would show up at the room where the leaders of the Highland Orc and Winged-kin teams are while they are already doing their jobs.

Shiki exchanges a greeting with them.

“...Fumu. Looks like there’s no problems in particular. We need competent personnel that can collate the knowledge of Waka-sama and the situation of Asora though... The land group can manage with Sari, and in terms of the sea group, we could find a Neptune that has good memory. Do you guys have anything you want to tell the sea people?” (Shiki)

Quickly reading the documents packed at the desk and grasping the current situation.

It was truly skilfull and fast.

“None from me. It is progressing smoothly.” (Orc)

Brief words from the Highland Orc.

She is a friend of Ema that was soon assigned to Shiki when he joined the ranks of Makoto’s followers.

There was already familiarity in how they both work.

“No need to contact the sea people from my side either. Just that, there’s a problem with the job we are currently progressing in.” (Winged-kin)

The report of the Winged-kin woman had the word ‘problem’ in it.

“Let’s hear it.” (Shiki)

“Regarding the composition of a medical team by your orders, Shiki-sama, we Winged-kin in general are weak in the arts of healing, and the present state is that many still haven’t been able to reach the minimum requirements that Shiki-sama established.” (Winged-kin)

“Fumu.” (Shiki)

“Adding to that, we are thinking of instructing the ones who are good at healing. And so—” (Winged-kin)

“Understood. I will ready some people by tonight or tomorrow morning. But even if I say healer, there’s several types of mages. Make sure to have them show their skills properly in both smarts and actual practice. Since you guys are fighting not in land but in the sky, there will be the need for your own race to provide a certain degree of support as well. It is a task for the Winged-kin. Make sure to take your time to properly handle it.” (Shiki)

“Thank you very much.” (Winged-kin)

“Anything else?” (Shiki)

“None.” (Winged-kin)

“Then, I will counting on you. The reports will be as always, at morning and night, excluding the cases of emergencies. Ah, also, there’s no mistake that these are the documents that must be given to Tomoe-dono and Mio-dono, right?” (Shiki)

“Correct.”

Receiving a bow from his subordinates, Shiki carries even more documents around his armpit, and takes a seat at his own desk.

His pen was moving swiftly on the completely blank papers.

The first one is a document that has a number of articles with added explanations from himself; this one is a report to show to his master Makoto.

Compiling all the mountain-like amount of reports from the documents and the thought transmissions from his subordinates, he arranges all the information in pages of A4 size.

Regular magic doesn’t work on those documents.

The documents that were piled up to the point that they were close to the size of a person and the oral reports from tens of people; there’s no way it would be possible to compile those in a small number of pages.

The things he has to report after dealing with them himself, the things that can be dealt with without the need of reporting to Makoto, and the things that

don't need to be reported.

After excluding those, he chooses and writes down the reports that must be told to Makoto.

What his master is interested in and what he isn't; Shiki knew this plenty well.

"...Today it ended up being more than normal. I don't want to trouble Waka-sama with too much, but...I can't reduce it anymore than this, so it can't be helped. Looks like it is already time for breakfast." (Shiki)

He leaves a number of documents he had brought from his room, and instead, grabbed the reports meant for Makoto and the documents for Tomoe and Mio, and then, left the room where his subordinates are.

In terms of time, it was around 30 minutes.

"Shiki-sama is as busy as always." (Orc)

"He is the kind of person that hates having time where he has nothing to do after all. At any rate, what an incredible amount of paper there is everyday. If we had those computers that appear in Waka-sama's memories, this room would always be clean though." (Winged-kin)

The Winged-kin touched the topic of computers.

At times, Shiki would mumble about this, but for the office workers, the computers looked like the dream device.

"Fufufu, Shiki-sama says that pretty often too. But creating it would take a lot of time and effort, so it might pile up other work, making it hard to do at the present state." (Orc)

"Is that maybe the application of Golems?" (Winged-kin)

"I don't know at all. But the shape does indeed remind me of the things the dwarfs make." (Orc)

"Even before Gods came to Asora, this place was already plenty awesome though. We might be getting a bit too greedy here." (Winged-kin)

"True." (Orc)

Within the documents that they have already checked, the two stand at a

section where the things that are planned to be disposed of are.

The Orc girl makes a short spell's aria, and the mountain of paper that was in front of her had disappeared in an instant.

In its place, there was a sparkling sphere the size of a bead left.

"If we return them to a core like this, we can use it again, so it doesn't end up being a waste. It is also strong. Paper is truly amazing." (Orc)

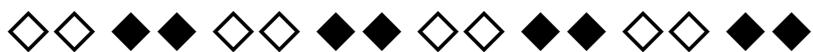
"In the homeland of Waka-sama, something like this was normal, or so I heard." (Winged-kin)

"Even if you were to buy several hundreds of these, it apparently only amounted to the price of a simple meal." (Orc)

It is possible to reprint paper by using a simple spell, moreover, it can be returned to white paper for reuse.

Even in Makoto's Japan, there was no such bizarre way of using paper.

The two were misunderstanding Makoto's homeland really naturally as they continue handling the mountain of work they have.



After Shiki finished his breakfast with Makoto and the others, he moved to the Kuzunoha Company that is in Tsige and Rotsgard via Asora, and heard out the reports regarding the state of the company.

Both stores are able to make preparations to begin regular work and open the store, so there's no need for Makoto and Shiki to be there for those. Shiki mostly shows up at the stores at the times slightly after they have already opened.

These kind of regulations were handled by Tomoe and Shiki since the early stages of the Kuzunoha Company, so by now, the employees have already gotten used to it.

"No problems with the inventory, no big requests either... If the requests for equipment are on this degree, the level of the adventurers hasn't changed much. Next is regarding the reservations huh. There's not only orders from frequent patrons, but also a lot from normal customers. Even though we are

only accepting a few of them as special exceptions..." (Shiki)

At the second floor of the Kuzunoha store at Rotsgard which serves as the base, Shiki was reading both the daily reports and the general overview of the current state as he groans.

Usually at this time, Makoto is mostly hearing out the reports of Tomoe and Mio, and checking out Asora and Kaleneon.

First he would summarize the situation of the store, give orders, and sort out what should be told to Makoto. For that reason, Shiki moves ahead of Makoto.

Right now he is worrying about the demands of the customers regarding the reservations and orders.

There's quite a lot of popularity with the goods that the Kuzunoha Company sells.

Since they have quite a variety of goods, it was a situation where there were a lot of people that wanted to reserve them in advance to order them at a time when they can get a set amount of them.

What Shiki meant by 'special exceptions' were people that are related to the Rembrandt Company, customers that personally negotiated a price with Makoto, and a number of them were cases where Makoto himself gave an ok to.

In the first place, in the cases when it relates to byproducts of Asora, they are simply restricting the amount of the supply, so if they wanted to, they can increase the quantity as much as they want.

In the case of specialties from other lands, they have the convenient transportation method of teleportation, so their ability to cope with demand is pretty high.

It is a problem that can be solved with a single decision of Makoto.

(Leaving aside the cases that Waka-sama has accepted, in the present state, if we were to accept the reservations and orders, it would make our sales stand out. Even so, it is obvious that there would be complains if we were to accept those orders without changing the aggregate amount of the inventory. Seeing

the current state of everyone, increasing the work a bit won't pose much problem, but...) (Shiki)

It was a complicated problem.

If they were to simply increase the amount sold, increase the performance, and increase the shares, it wouldn't pose much problem to the Kuzunoha Company.

But Makoto has the scary ideal of not stirring any winds in the Merchant Guild, and at the same time, answer the customers that come to the store as much as possible.

Makoto has somewhat begun to accept reality to a certain extent, but in terms of the fundamental truths of merchanting, his attitude is still naive.

"Shiki-sama, is it okay?"

After a knock in the door sounded, a voice speaks out to Shiki.

It was the Forest Oni employee, Akua.

"Enter." (Shiki)

"Excuse my intrusion. Regarding the meeting with the Merchant Guild in the afternoon, we received contact that it has been changed to the night. They said that if we are going to be absent, to please notify them before noon." (Akua)

"Meeting huh. It is the one that Waka-sama was scheduled to participate in, right?" (Shiki)

"Yes." (Akua)

Change in the time of the meeting.

If it were a while ago, the answer would have certainly been 'be absent'.

But the situation has changed a bit now.

After the incident of the Variants rampaging in Rotsgard, Makoto began to move more actively as the representative of the company.

"If it is at night, it would come with dinner huh. Moreover, I can't go..." (Shiki)

"How about telling them we will be absent from it?" (Akua)

“Waka-sama will say he is going. It is a meeting with the guild, so Zara will most likely be going as well. Rembrandt and him are acquainted, so maybe because of that, I think that Waka-sama is showing him consideration.” (Shiki)

“But Mio-sama has most likely already decided on the dinner, and most of all —” (Akua)

“I know. It can’t be helped. No other choice but to do this. If Waka-sama decides to participate, we will have Mio-dono accompany him.” (Shiki)

“Waka-sama and Mio-sama?” (Akua)

Akua repeats as if it were unexpected.

Because that’s a pairing that normally doesn’t happen when there’s business related to the Kuzunoha Company.

“That’s right. But, just in case, please go as well, Akua.” (Shiki)

“...Puh?!” (Akua)

“What’s with the ‘puh’? I will promptly ask Waka-sama about the meeting.” (Shiki)

“Wait, Shiki-sama?!” (Akua)

“.....”

“Please don’t begin speaking in thought transmission as if nothing, Shiki-sama!” (Akua)

“.....”

“Akua, it looks like Waka-sama will be participating.” (Shiki)

“W-Why?” (Akua)

“If you can’t attend no matter what, I will have to ask Eris of it. Is that okay with you?” (Shiki)

“You ask me if that’s okay, but what do you mean by that?” (Akua)

“Are you okay with Waka-sama, Mio-dono, and Eris going to the meeting of the Merchant Guild?” (Shiki)

“...I am not okay with it.” (Akua)

“Zara will be there, and if you just say that we will be participating in the meeting with women company, I don’t think anything big will happen. I am counting on you.” (Shiki)

“Understood.” (Akua)

“Sorry for the trouble.” (Shiki)

“I will be taking my leave.” (Akua)

Akua left the room with her back slightly bend and her head hung down.

Seeing her off with only his eyes, Shiki soon resumed his work, and silently handled with ease the work related to the company.

(Hm, this should be enough. What’s left is to wait for night to come and confirm how it went. Now then, today there were around five places I had to show up at huh. It is great that they were all matters that didn’t need Waka-sama to be present. I will request someone to handle the matter of the letters, and so...after returning to Asora, it would be afternoon by the time I go to where the Eldwas and the Arkes are. It would be best to check on Amelia’s state while it is still bright outside huh.) (Shiki)

Holding a number of letters in hand, he goes down to the first floor, and gave it to the closest employee he found.

The last thing he did was to do a round in the store, greeting the customers, and then, he left the store.



“Shiki, that girl you left in Komoe’s care. If I remember correctly, a student of Waka-ja ga.” (Tomoe)

“You must be talking about Amelia.” (Shiki)

“Right, that one-ja. Do you think she can turn into someone useful?” (Tomoe)

“...Can’t tell yet. She is still at the stage where she is refining her own potential after all.” (Shiki)

“Isn’t that something that you are teaching her in the Academy’s classes?” (Tomoe)

“The person herself said she wanted to work at the Kuzunoha Company. Right now that’s too difficult for her, so I am checking her potential once again.”
(Shiki)

“Even though you don’t demand that much of the other students?” (Tomoe)

“The Rembrandt sisters are in the side of our connections; Jin has a different quality to begin with. Even if it is only basic training, we can’t look at them in the same standards.” (Shiki)

Shiki and Tomoe were conversing as they had their meal.

Asora’s dining room.

In this night where Makoto and Mio have gone to Rotsgard, Tomoe and Shiki were having their dinner at a bar that’s close to the arena of Asora.

The surroundings were filled with hustle and bustle, and the Orcs gathered there were enjoying the food and drinks.

“Is that all there is to it? Komoe said that you were seeing how she was doing everyday and were paying her quite a lot of attention though?” (Tomoe)

“...She is a student of Waka-sama after all. I simply want to do as much as possible to help out in what she wants to do.” (Shiki)

“Well you see, I myself snuck a peek on how she was doing, and she was pretty desperate. Shiki, it looks like she is quite in love with you-ja no.” (Tomoe)

“Hngh.” (Shiki)

“Even Waka-sama noticed, you know? Is it something to be surprised about?”
(Tomoe)

“It might be because she reminds me of a nostalgic past of mine. Won’t deny that there’s various factors affecting my decision.” (Shiki)

“How laudable-ja na. I do have a slight dislike for honorary students, but that girl, she kinda reminds me of Lime. Don’t hate that type of people.” (Tomoe)

“Thank you very much.” (Shiki)

“...Of course, that’s on the assumption that she can become someone useful-ja ga na.” (Tomoe)

“I will show you that I can train her to a level that suits your taste. When that time comes, I would like to place her under the care of Lime, is that okay?”
(Shiki)

“I don’t mind. If they are of use, no matter how many there are, it wouldn’t be a bother. I see. If we are to use her in the same way as Lime, she would need a decent amount of fighting prowess. And the chances she will have of seeing you and Waka would increase huh.” (Tomoe)

“It might seem like a slightly sly move though.” (Shiki)

“That’s just like you. But...” (Tomoe)

“Yes?” (Shiki)

“If you are planning on having that girl give up being a hyuman like in Lime’s case, make sure to get Waka’s permission first. At the time with Lime, Waka got incredibly angry after all. Don’t wanna experience that ever again-ja. Don’t wanna see it either.” (Tomoe)

“...Understood.” (Shiki)

Tomoe ended by warning Shiki.

Words that were given out so that Shiki doesn’t repeat the same error.

Being seen through the last method he hadn’t revealed, Shiki swallowed his words, and nodded with a meek expression.

“You are going to be researching and training from now on, right? It will be difficult, but do your best. I will be taking my leave first.” (Tomoe)

“Ah, yes. Thanks for the consideration. Have a good night.” (Shiki)

“Idiot. Waka will be calling me later anyways. No way I can sleep. I will be taking a break, a break.” (Tomoe)

“Thanks for the hard work.” (Shiki)

Shiki sees off his senpai that’s waving her hand as she leaves.

“Now then, it will soon be the time for Ema’s report. Looks like I will be able to begin my research in the same time as always.” (Shiki)

He glances at the residents that were making a ruckus while drinking, and

while thinking about the plans of later, he left the store.

And then...

“It is already morning huh.” (Shiki)

His sleepless days continued.

Luckily, he was a hyuman in the past that was bound by the need of sleep and was the type that regretted the time lost when sleeping.

For Shiki, being fine not sleeping was a plus.

It was the complete opposite of Tomoe and Mio.

Because those girls enjoy the comfiness of sleeping.

“Good grief. No matter how much time there is, it just isn’t enough.” (Shiki)

And in reality, there’s no fatigue in the expression of Shiki.

You could even say there’s actually glee in his eyes.

Shiki was enjoying a plenty lot the busy everyday life.

Extra Story XXXIII: Days off in Kuzunoha

“Our place is fifth category.”

“Fifth category?! That’s...quite the generous choice there. Ah, if I remember correctly, the Rembrandt Company is also fifth category.”

“Maybe he took reference of him. I haven’t heard the details from Raidou though.”

“Lately, the person himself has been participating and cooperating frequently but, is he the type that does business himself? I feel like, lately, he has been out more often. Truly envying.”

“Fortunately, we have begun to ride in the flow of this town’s market, so the amount of offers that come to Raidou have increased. It is thanks to everyone. Next time, Raidou himself will be coming, so please make do with me for this time around.”

“Well, it is easier for me to speak with Akua-dono and Shiki-dono. It actually helps me out. Since it seems like Eris-dono likes to stir up the place, and Raidou-dono seems to be still be green in the detailed topics.”

“...It is thanks to Representative Zara that we are able to somehow participate in the guild gatherings even when we are a lacking company. We of the Kuzunoha are always grateful for this.”

The Forest Oni, that was called out and had stopped her feet, was standing in place talking to that person.

The place is the Merchant Guild of Rotsgard.

The one who called out the Forest Oni when she was about to leave after finishing the probing that was under the name of ‘friendly gathering’ was the leader that keeps the order in the merchants of this town, Zara.

The one who is speaking with him while lowering her head down a number of times was the employee of the Kuzunoha Company, Akua.

Different from her usual look, she is currently wearing a white shirt with a

dark blue suit on top.

Her conduct with that straight back and a gentle smile in her face was something that she had learned as she participated in this kind of gatherings as an employee of the Kuzunoha Company. As of now, it truly looks natural.

Even when he was by no means praising her coworker and lord, her face still showed an amicable smile.

The conversation of the two was in regards to the days off of the company employees.

The fifth category meant that every week, there's a one day break; and once a month, you are free to apply for a day to take free at the person's convenience. In this world, you could say these are quite the extraordinary worker conditions.

It normally has to be a quite the big company or a very taxing job that requires specialized personnel for the company to choose fifth category. That's how much of a term it is.

By the way, depending on the month, there are cases where the total days off end up as six, but in those cases, it was normal to remove one of those free days.

"Right, today I didn't speak to you because of that. What I wanted to talk to you about is regarding that fifth category." (Zara)

"Hm? Is there a problem?" (Akua)

"The Kuzunoha Company is being a great help in the reconstruction of the town. Because of this, we have requested from our side for the store to work for a while without any days off, right? But if we consider the number of employees reported, fifth category might be a bit bad. There might also be people that would stick their head stupidly because of this." (Zara)

"..."

"Of course, I don't have any intentions of preaching to you about matters of that extent. I just thought about telling you to renew the employee list or change it to the regular first category. It is not something that should take much trouble, right?" (Zara)

Zara spoke to Akua with a tone that had no hostility at all.

Having a break once a month under the first category is what's most common.

Those are quite the normal conditions for an employee in a company.

"Thank you for your consideration. I will certainly inform Raidou and Shiki regarding this." (Akua)

"Anyways, I see. Fifth category huh. Our place might have to change from third category to fifth category and increase the personnel... Fumu." (Zara)

"...To be more accurate, it is more like fifth category as well as a bit of sixth category. It is certainly true that this is an incredibly good environment to work in as a worker." (Akua)

Akua gave her thanks to Zara, and speaks about her own opinions regarding her working environment.

"?! Meaning that not only do you have days off every week, you also get break times every day?" (Zara)

"? Yeah." (Akua)

"Good grief. No way he is leaving several hundreds of employees unreported, right?" (Zara)

"Just that..." (Akua)

"Hm?" (Zara)

"Even when there's a break in the work of the company, there's obviously training in magic and combat." (Akua)

"...Right. The Kuzunoha Company's employees need to be in a required level of battle prowess before being accepted." (Zara)

"There's exceptions, but most fall in that category. Thanks to this condition, the lack of personnel doesn't seem to get solved. Raidou is a worrywart, so we want to solve as much of the problems that occur by ourselves as workers of the Kuzunoha Company's store." (Akua)

"Akua-dono and the other employees are all still alive after the incident at the

Academy Festival, so the thinking of Raidou-dono might be the correct one, but I think the level he looks for is way too high. You guys are working inside the town simply as a company after all..." (Zara)

"But in the end, we are demi-humans. There's no belittling between us demi-humans, but there's a lot of hyumans that do look down on us. And we are opening shop within a group like that, so he was most likely worried for us." (Akua)

"It hurts my ears." (Zara)

"This came out as a topic in today's meeting, but we are always looking for new employees..... Just to make it clear, representative Zara, we do have a number of hyumans we plan on employing." (Akua)

Akua said the first half with a smile, and the latter part, whispered it to Zara in a low voice.

"...What?" (Zara)

What she said was shocking, but Zara also whispered lowly, understanding the intention of Akua.

The Kuzunoha Company doesn't employ hyumans.

That matter had been made a topic several number of times in the guild meetings.

These were just the pitiful howls of other companies that had no other way to attack the Kuzunoha Company other than this though.

Akua understood this and didn't let it leak carelessly, dealing with it without looking for agreement.

If that matter were to move in the surface instead of hidden, it would be quite the big deal; probably not in a favorable way for the Kuzunoha Company.

Zara was able to reach to that conclusion quickly, so he waited for the continuation of Akua's words.

Hyumans will be able to work in the company, it will be a working place that accepts hyuman employees; that's in no way going to bring only good effects in the Kuzunoha Company.

“That’s why, if representative Zara has trustworthy people, please do introduce them to us. We will properly test them, and if they manage to pass, we will be hiring them. Of course, this matter is something that Raidou and Shiki are already in the know of.” (Akua)

“...Is that okay?” (Zara)

“We don’t mind it if you are to leak this information to other representatives by saying that you managed to pull it out from us. But do understand that the minimum line we look for is people that can at the very least graduate at the Academy with quite the exemplar grades.” (Akua)

“...I see. There are indeed people like that. If I remember correctly, Jin and Amelia, right? So you guys are planning on hiring them. Hmph, Raidou-dono is also... no, this must be the suggestion of Shiki-dono huh. Whichever the case, they are quite shrewd. Understood. I will not restrain myself in making it my accomplishment.” (Zara)

“This is just a small show of gratitude for the daily consideration you give us. Well then, I will be taking my leave now.” (Akua)

“Okay. Thanks for the hard work.” (Zara)

Akua lowered her head deeply once, and then, turns around with her back facing Zara.

Orderly steps rang as they got further away from Zara.

But suddenly, the silent expression of his while he was seeing her off had turned into a grim one.

“Akua-dono! Sorry but, can I ask one thing?” (Zara)

“What is it?” (Akua)

“Akua-dono, you said that you take combat training, but in that case, if we were to count those training instances, how many actual breaks do you have in the month? This is pure curiosity of mine, but it just bothered me you see.” (Zara)

“Actual breaks huh. In that case...it would be twice a year.” (Akua)

“...Huh?” (Zara)

“Well then.” (Akua)

Akua left this time for sure.

Only Zara was left in place.

The last thing she said was quite shocking for Zara.

“T-Twice a year? That Raidou, just how do his employees manage to keep up with that? I don’t understand. It is a complete mystery.” (Zara)

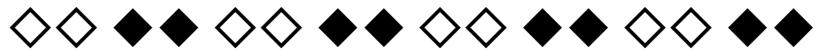
The reconstruction of the Academy Town, Rotsgard, is proceeding well.

The merchants obviously were passing busy days.

Within that, the dutiful attitude of the Kuzunoha Company’s employees as well as their will to work was exemplary to the point that other representatives sent envying gazes towards them.

Zara thought that this was because of the great working environment that the fifth category provides, but that belief had been quickly shattered to pieces just a few moments ago.

Raidou is still missing quite a lot as a merchant, but in terms of gaining loyalty from his employees, even Zara felt like he would want Raidou to teach him.



The working conditions of the Kuzunoha Company are just as Akua told Zara, fifth category.

But the reality was different.

This is also something she said, but she has combat training too, and there are times where there’s work related to the whole race when returning to Asora.

Even if they are working in the company, if they were to say whether they have a day off every week, the answer would be no.

“I don’t have any dissatisfaction with Waka-sama, but we do have to be thankful for Tomoe-sama in this occasion.”

“To Shiki-sama as well. If we were to do as Waka-sama said, our bodies would just rot.”

Laughs and orders were flying around.

An Elder Dwarf and an Orc were conversing with beer mug in hand and a red face.

It is the bar that serves as a dining hall in Asora.

When it is late and gets darker, the residents that drew a good sweat during the day gather in this place looking for food and drinks.

“I heard that he said at first that we should have two days off every week. That’s crazy.” (Dwarf)

“Even one day off is a grateful thing every once in a while, but having many of them every month would be troubling.” (Orc)

“Yeah! Two breaks a year is already a luxury. In the first place, we can all live in peace without the need for a night watch in this place, you know.” (Dwarf)

“True. It is because of diligent daily training and working that one can progress. It would be troubling to have breaks every week!” (Orc)

What they were talking about was also about the days off.

The same topic Zara and Akua had in Rotsgard.

For the residents of Asora, Misumi Makoto is an incredibly generous lord.

Of course, the amount of dissatisfaction and criticism towards him is low.

But in terms of the labouring conditions, there was a slight dispute between Makoto and them.

To put it in perspective, Makoto, who is in a managing position, proposed days off, but the laborers that are the residents of Asora spoke out their discontent for that.

At a glance, it looks like the normal flow of things, but it was quite the weird confrontation.

Because Makoto proposed two days off every week, and the residents complained that it was too much.

The residents actually requested for no days off.

It goes without saying that Makoto's eyes were wide open at that time.

Not just once a week, they refused the very idea of having days off as if it were natural.

His followers said 'understood' and tried to bring the matter to a close, but Makoto obviously gave out the 'Hold it!'.

He got worried that, at this rate, the company might become a black corporation with exploitation of its employees and evil managers.

But this was brought by Makoto's way too lacking knowledge of how this world worked, and he was simply speaking with the common sense of a completely different world.

The claims of the residents were concise, and if Makoto were to leave his common sense to the side, what they said would be quite the natural logic.

And so...

"Until now, I have lived for the sake of protecting the tomorrow of my village." (Dwarf)

"It was impossible to think about having decent sleep. Because there's no way to tell when and what kind of attack we would receive. We are having our breaks every night already." (Orc)

"After moving to Asora, there's a mountain of things to do. Even though we would be able to proceed further the more we do, why is it that we should have to take days off in specified days when our stamina and mental health don't require that rest?" (Dwarf)

"There's point in training only when you do it every day. If we were to take a day off once every week, it might not only bring stagnation to our training, but even bring deterioration." (Orc)

"We have been given food, a place to sleep, and safety. We want to repay that gratitude with work. I would like it if we were allowed to work without rest." (Dwarf)

"Even if I were to be given a day off, I would find a reason to work or train. That's why, there's no need for it." (Orc)

So on, and so forth.

For Makoto, this would be a conversation on another level.

For the strong people of the wasteland that were in an environment where no one was sure if they had a tomorrow, Asora's livelihood was way too much of a luxury.

Being brought to an unknown land, ordering them to make a settlement, and making them investigate; Makoto put it all together in this way, so it was pretty clear the difference in views he and the others had.

It deeply differed from the residents that think of sleeping every day in peace as a blessing.

To begin with, in this world, there may be cases where people have days off once or twice a month, but it is rare for them to have set days for those days off.

Even if they are working in a company, it was more close to the treatment of a public servant.

In the first place, even in the common sense of the hyumans, the proposal of Makoto had way too many days off.

“In the end, thanks to the holiday system that Tomoe-sama proposed, things settled down. So let’s say all’s well that ends well.” (Dwarf)

“Right. I am fine with having days off once in summer and once in winter.”
(Orc)

“Waka-sama likes festivals, so we will probably be going wild in those holidays.” (Dwarf)

“Then I am looking forward to it! Waka-sama is providing us with the opportunity to drink and eat. I am truly thankful! That’s plenty enough for me. There’s no need for days off! Let’s drink till morning and then go to work~!!”
(Orc)

“Yeah! That sounds great! I am totally in!” (Dwarf)

Everyone began to raise their mugs as they chanted ‘We are thankful!’ ‘Thankful!’.

It was a sight that one would think, isn't this just working as an excuse to drink?

"Good grief."

There was a single man, that was working at the other side of the counter, shrugging.

An Arke.

He has been entrusted with this bar.

If asked why him, it is because Mio was meddling with the menu and the store interior, and in the end, she ordered for someone to regulate this, so it ended up this way.

Maybe because he found being the master of the bar as fun, he didn't have any discontent.

"Good evening. A samurai on the rocks, please." (Akua)

"Akua, welcome back. I will make it promptly." (Arke)

After the greetings, the Forest Oni had taken a seat on the round seats that are lined up at the counter, and ordered something with a casual tone like that of a regular.

It is Akua who has finished all of her work for the day.

Samurai on the rocks is a favorite cocktail of hers and it originates from the world of Makoto.

Akua likes weak and sweet alcoholic drinks, but lately, she has been able to enjoy the tougher drinks as well.

She directed her gaze towards the guys that were making a ruckus with a specially loud voice and made a smile.

"They had their complaints about Waka-sama at the beginning, but well, just as always, they end up going 'thanks' as the ending. No problems. You are the unusual one right now. Eris is not together with you today?" (Arke)

"Eris will be with Komoe-sama tonight, so she said she will be passing for today." (Akua)

“...The reason why Komoe-sama has been doing weird things lately is because of her influence huh. Good grief... But my preparations of the hunter mist have gone to waste then.” (Arke)

“In that case, I will drink that one as well. By the way, what is that about the complaints towards Waka-sama?” (Akua)

The hunter mist is an original cocktail of the Arke that was made taking the demands of Eris as reference.

Eris has the tendency to enjoy strong alcohol as if it were water, so it enters into the strong type of drinks.

“They said that they are glad the days off didn’t increase.” (Arke)

“Ah, I see. Leaving aside weirdos like Eris, there’s only a minority who would prefer having more breaks.” (Akua)

Akua made a wry smile.

When Makoto proposed the pleasant working conditions of having two days off every week plus a salary every thirty days, her partner Eris stood up and went ‘banzai!’.

She was one of the few ones who agreed with Makoto there.

“People who want to become stronger, people who want to work more; there’s a lot of those in Asora after all. Of course, we also get a lot of work from Mio-sama. There must be a lot of people who think that having too many breaks would dull their bodies. It can’t be helped.” (Arke)

“I would like the right to be absent in the drill camps, but in general, I don’t have any particular dissatisfactions.” (Akua)

“In the first place, Waka-sama is speaking about breaks, and yet, he himself doesn’t take breaks. For actual days off, it is better to follow the proposal of Tomoe-sama about this holiday system that comes twice a year.” (Arke)

“True. In Waka-sama’s case, he considers his own training as hobby time, hence, taking a break. Even if there were two days off a week, I don’t think it would have changed much from the current Asora.” (Akua)

“No doubt.” (Arke)

The two retort to the training of magic and bow that Makoto does and he himself calls as hobby time.

At times, he would wake up even when it was still dark outside; at times, he would miss meals; at times, he would reduce his sleeping time.

Seeing Makoto training with such diligence, or knowing he does this, it would be obvious what answer the residents of Asora would have when asked to take a break as told.

The answer would be no.

If Makoto truly wanted to make it into a two days off every week, an order wouldn't have been enough. He would have had to show it with him actually following that practice, or it would be difficult to make anyone accept it.

And in reality, those two who have seen the current Makoto, even if the two days off a week were present, they would simply take a break in name only and would still act just like they have been doing until now. That's what they thought as they looked at each other and laughed.

"Oh, looks like the Gorgons have come as well. It will get even noisier." (Arke)

"Ara, if there's a group there that came from the outside, I would like to have a talk with them." (Akua)

"Keep it moderate, okay?" (Arke)

"Okay. Thanks for the food." (Akua)

With the drink of Eris in hand, she heads to the new high pitched group that had come into the bar.

The girls already smelled thickly of alcohol, so it was clear that the Gorgons had already drunk somewhere else before coming here.

"What what, what are you all talking about~? Let us in~." (Gorgon)

"We were talking about how working is living!"

"Nee-chan, more importantly, where did you leave your clothes?!"

"I am wearing clothes~!" (Gorgon)

"I can only see them as strings!"

“Listen well, lady! We were talking about Waka’s proposal about working environment! It ain’t the type that goes along with the standards of work! Rather, it is more for the specialized areas...”

“Old man, that’s a cask you got there! Just go sleep~!” (Gorgon)

“Glasses glasses...”

“H-Hey!” (Gorgon)

“Fuuuu~~siooon!!”

The way to wrap up the daily work.

There might be slight differences in this bar, but it is a sight that can be normally seen when night comes.

Even if there’s more races, more different environments, more work; the residents of Asora continue their fulfilling daily lives as always.

Extra Story XXXIV: Manga SS – Tomoe’s training journey and a Crab

TLN: This is a complementary story with the chapter 17 of the manga, or so it says...but I would say it is actually chapter 20.

And all extras with ‘Manga SS’ in them are exactly that, manga side stories, meaning they are from very early stages of the story.

“What-ja. You only got numbers going for ya? It has been a while since pipsqueaks have tried to go against me, so I ended up expecting something.”
(Tomoe)

A wasteland that is called the World’s Border and is considered one of the most dangerous places in the world.

For some reason, a woman was standing there in the middle of a pile of corpses, sweeping away the stains in her sword.

“Hm...If I remember correctly, aren’t they called Red Bees? I think I defeated

the boss of this swarm..." (Tomoe)

The woman looked at a part of the corpses, and steps on one of the corpses that is specially bigger than the others.

Her opponents were indeed Red Bees, which are big insect mamonos.

The one she was nudging with her leg is a Red Bee Queen.

It is normally at the deepest parts of the swarm making it difficult to encounter.

"From what I know, the ones doing the hunting outside should be the soldiers. Are there instances where the whole hive goes hunting?" (Tomoe)

The Red Bees are the kind of mamonos that have their danger level change heavily depending on the size of the hive.

When many are encountered at once, unless they are adventurers who are incredibly skilled or have their own circumstances, the normal decision is to escape.

But Tomoe is not only on a whole different plane from adventurers, her very existence is different. She was a peak existence within dragons before she had decided to have Makoto as her master after all.

Even if the whole hive of Red Bees were to attack, counting the Queen, it wouldn't even be a challenge.

She could crush them all with just brute force swordsmanship without the need to use techniques or skills.

Of course, without damaging the clothes she likes.

"...Fumu, now that I think about it, I practically have no meetings with enemies that prove challenging. If this incident was caused because these guys were being chased and attacked me due to being cornered..." (Tomoe)

Right in the middle of the wasteland where even surviving is difficult, Tomoe was smiling all in her lonesome.

And then, she looks at the direction where the insects had come from.

"There might be an interesting one. I have to catch up with Mio quickly, but

well, it is not as if I am inferior to her in actual ability, it is just that this weird number called level is lower than that of hers though." (Tomoe)

For some reason, she was making excuses by herself.

Tomoe had sheathed her sword and ran looking forward to this supposed strong opponent.

She abandoned the corpses that would easily be enough to afford a two story house if gathered properly as if they were nothing.

"In the first place, Waka's level being one is the very proof that such a number is a deception, but if I think of this as a training journey, it does feel fun. I have gotten pretty used to using a katana too." (Tomoe)

Tomoe touches in glee the sheathed single-edged sword that she plans on having as her trusty weapon.

A katana.

Right now, it is simply a prototype that the dwarves made though.

An ivy that was approaching her at fast speed had frozen in place with a single glare of hers and was blown away.

That ivy normally aims for prey that is alone or is sleeping. It is a creature that one has to be on alert for in the wasteland.

Even when the real body that is the bulb lives underground, it can dig through the ground like a mole and move. It is one of the species that usually wipes out parties, considered an Adventurer Killer.

There's many an adventurer that get attacked by them at night and have had their life end there.

"If I were to hunt the same stuff as Mio -as that spider-, would I level 500 to 600 levels? I was still in the middle of the third arc of Yatsushiro Shogun, and Waka had just recently recommended me the Tokaido arc of Koumon-sama, and yet..." (Tomoe)

Tomoe continued running deftly at a speed faster than riding a horse.

Inside her head, there wasn't a single shred of fear in regards to the dangers

of the wasteland.

She was thinking about easily finishing this training journey that his master had told her about before.

It was clear that she didn't believe that strength was equal to level.

And in reality, Tomoe doesn't think that she would lose to Mio if they were to have an all-out fight, and she doesn't think she would be able to win against Makoto even if he is level 1.

While she was rambling, a number of mamonos camouflaging as different shaped rocks attacked Tomoe all at once.

They had sharp claws and fangs, and were covered in scales similar in texture to stone, and had a look similar to that of crocodiles.

At the end of their tails, they also have some sort of needle used for attacks resembling that of scorpions.

It was a complete surprise attack.

But Tomoe used a punch and kick to deal with two of them that rushed first, and after that, she unsheathed her sword and went by cutting them down with one slash.

Even those scales that clearly had high defensive capability were powerless against Tomoe.

It didn't take long to trample down those pitiful creatures, but Tomoe stopped her feet in place without running on just like the time with the ivy.

Crocodile

“...What’s with these guys? I don’t remember there being mamonos like these. Hmm...” (Tomoe)

She picks up one of the corpses.

A whole corpse of it should be bigger than Tomoe in size, but she managed to pick them up without any difficulties as she checked them out one after another.

“Someone or something has tinkered with them. I see, it would be safe to assume that those insects were running away from an opponent of this nature huh.” (Tomoe)

The scales, claws, and every part of their bodies; Tomoe patted those areas,

checking them out in order.

“I see. They made them eat Spirits huh. Earth element...the low-ranked ones most likely. They change in this way after eating several of those Spirits that look like mini people huh. Nfufu, I don’t know who it is, but this is quite the crazy and interesting experiment here-ja na.” (Tomoe)

Tomoe continues investigating the mamonos in the same fashion.

“Hoh? Even though they were artificially raised, they are different from chimeras in the fact that these guys still retain their ability to reproduce. Let’s check out the taste.....Hm, let’s not. Just in case, let’s throw a few of these corpses into Asora to research them. We can check out whether they are comestible after. In the first place, these guys don’t look like they would taste good raw.” (Tomoe)

Tomoe continued her investigation, but for now, stopped her hand that was grabbing a piece of meat, and looked at her surroundings.

Light brown stones were strewn about here and there.

A number of them were mamonos camouflaged.

In other words, the place that Tomoe was standing in was already incredibly dangerous, but the mamonos, that had their comrades defeated easily, didn’t attack immediately, and Tomoe didn’t show signs of being bothered by the current situation.

Within that strange state of things, Tomoe showed the best smile of the day as she raised her head and looked up.

“It must be this one-ja na. The ruler around this area. It is quite big. And it looks like it has been tinkered in a different way from the pseudo-lizards here.” (Tomoe)

Her gaze was directed at a massive rock that was creating a big shadow.

No, it is a mamono camouflaged as a massive rock.

“It doesn’t matter if you are or not the one who caused the abnormal behaviour of the Red Bees. Simply rejoice that you will become a stepping stone towards my first training journey!” (Tomoe)

Even when she understood that it is a mamono, Tomoe charged towards the massive rock with katana in hand.

She was truly like a maddened warrior.

On the other hand, the mamono noticed that it was in danger, so it undid its camouflage and showed its real form as it made the ground tremble.

The giant mass of stone had opened up from the middle, and two eyeballs were visible close to the ends of it.

From the sides, four pairs of legs spread out and supported its giant body.

Aside from those eight legs, there's also a characteristic extremity of it that resembled that of a giant scissor, and using that, it tried to attack Tomoe.

It was a strange-looking mamono that differed from the crocodile-looking ones.

The scissor attack was by no means fast, but seeing that figure of it, Tomoe had stopped her movements for an instant, and the attack of the mamono made a direct hit on her.

She was blown away and fell on her knees.

But...there was a hand in between where the quite heavy scissor was and Tomoe, so this showed that she at least managed to defend against it.

“Giuuuuii!!”

“...”

The giant mamono makes the air tremble with a strange cry.

It is a roar that showed its will to battle.

Even so, Tomoe didn't show any signs of faltering. She silently brushes away the dirt from her clothes and raised her face.

“O-Ooooooh!! Isn't that a c-crab?!” (Tomoe)

She didn't show any pain towards the attack she received, or anger, and didn't return a roar against it.

Her eyes and expression were filled completely with happiness and

excitement as she shouted.

It was a mystery whether she had received damage or not, but at the very least, there's doesn't seem to be any effects from blocking those giant pincers.

"I saw it! I certainly did! Your meat dipped inside a nabe in a warm household with cold snow dancing at the outside!! You are a crab-ja!!" (Tomoe)

"???"

"Are you a red king crab? A snow crab? A hanasaki crab? Ei, it doesn't matter which you are! The meat in your pincers, every bit of paste in your shell; I will bring it all to Asora!!" (Tomoe)

"Ugiii?!"

"Kufufufufu. Ready your blade -- I-Itadakimasu-jaaaaa!!" (Tomoe)

Within the quite aggressive land crab types, there's one that's named Gran Crab.

It is omnivorous, and eats grass, insects, animals, and even attacks mamonos without any distinction. It is quite the powerful mamono.

There's stories telling of it being a delicacy, but there's few alive in the present who have tasted it and can confirm it.

This one resembles the Gran Crab quite a lot, but it has far superior defensive and offensive power, as well as size. It is the one standing at the top of the food chain in an area of the wasteland.....or at least, it was standing until yesterday...

Crab



“This is...a crab huh. It is a delicacy-ja na.” (Tomoe)

“Yes. It takes away my words. It is without doubt splendid. It is delicious.”

“Umu, umu.”

“...”

Tomoe had put a stop to her training after the appearance of a crab, and returned to Asora. Right after, she pushed the preparation of it and checked the taste.

Leaving aside whether it is the exact same taste as the ones that the people in

period dramas enjoy, the Gran Crab that has been prepared by the hands of someone was truly delicious. Tomoe and the lucky Orcs and Mist Lizards that were at that place were munching on the mountain of crab meat.

Tomoe was enjoying the meal speaking out only few words, and there's also the people that are participating in cooking the crab.

With its size, even when it is only one, there was plenty enough for everyone.

Everyone thought that it was worth the struggle against the heavy and tough shell.

“T-Tomoe-sama!!”

“What is it at such a time-ja?” (Tomoe)

At that moment, a single Orc ran there with a message.

Even when Tomoe ignored it by saying in thought transmission that it is bothering her meal, the Orc pushed on. It must be an emergency the Orc wanted to relay no matter what.

“Hah...Hah... Ema told me to relay this to you as soon as possible!”

He must have been running at full-speed. He hurried his report even while he was trying to catch his breath.

“Now now, calm down. Eat this first—” (Tomoe)

“Reporting! For a while now, Mio-sama has been sighted going around Tomoe-sama's records in Waka-sama's memory warehouse—”

“W-Whaaaat?!” (Tomoe)

Tomoe wastefully spouts out the crab meat in the middle of the report, and then, looks at a certain direction where the place that could be basically called a national treasury was lying, and instantly teleported.

Waka-sama's memory warehouse; Tomoe's records...

Those are the memories that Tomoe had scooped out from Misumi Makoto, and had carefully, reaaaally carefully piled up, produced, and edited... It is the place where the period dramas and other memories of Makoto, as well as a variety of information, are stored.

“I won’t let you, Mio!! That’s by no means food!!” (Tomoe)

That’s right, Tomoe’s roar had resonated just a few seconds after the report.

Extra Story XXXV: Manga SS – Adventurer Guild on the edge

The Adventurer Guild in Tsige is busy.

One could easily count the amount of adventurers who would use this town as their base, and the requests given there are top-class.

The reason for both of those things is because of the place that is adjacent to Tsige; the wasteland that no one knows where it ends yet.

People that aim to get a quick fortune, people that are in a training journey, people attracted to the unknowns of the wasteland.

There’s indeed adventurers that step into the wasteland on their own will, but there’s also merchants who see the wasteland as a place overflowing with allure due to the many valuable articles that can be obtained from there.

Even with the many dangers squirming there that don’t match the worth of challenging it, there’s still people in Tsige who aim for the wasteland.

In other words, adventurers and merchants are involved, so the Adventurer Guild, which not only manages the matters related to the wasteland but also the safety of the area, are always quite busy.

For the Guild personnel, being assigned to the Tsige branch meant that they have been promoted, but at the same time, there’s high risk of being crushed by the work and ending up retiring. It is a dangerous workplace in a different meaning from the adventurers.

“Are those all the reports for today?”

Adventurer Guild, Tsige branch.

At the third floor where adventurers would rarely step into, at one of the rooms there, a man who had both of his legs crossed on top of the desk and

both hands linked around his mouth spoke to ask for confirmation.

The one facing him was an elderly man.

He had a decent amount of presence, and must have had a good standing as well, and yet, the words directed at him had made the man straighten his back even more and place strength in his whole body.

“Yes, Representative!”

The man sitting looked like he was still in the middle of his thirties, and if they are compared solely by appearance, it would be more plausible if their positions were reversed.

But...if the presence those two are releasing is taken into account, in other words, if someone else were to be in the room, they would be able to tell that the positions they are in are the correct ones.

That's how much *status*

the presence that the man was releasing from his whole body had.

“So the completion rate of the wasteland related requests is still as low as always. Well, it probably can't be helped with how many of those requests are unreasonable though...”

“But the target number of requests that the headquarters had placed for this month has been safely fulfilled.”

“I don't care about the quota. Leaving aside the numerical values set here, you haven't forgotten the ideal request completion rate that the Adventurer Guild should be aiming for, right?”

“Of course not! In the cases of the Adventurer Guilds established in common areas, the minimum completion rate of requests is 70%. The ideal to aim for is 85%!”

He responds to his superior with tension covering his body. There was no sign of the relaxed state that he showed when the strange adventurer had brought the ruby eye's eyes he had appraised.

“...So, what's the current number for Tsige?”

“.....18%.”

“Can’t even brag about it.”

“S-Sorry for overstepping here but, thinking about the special circumstances of this town, I think there’s parts that simply can’t be helped. And in reality, the completion rate of the requests that are not related to the wasteland have surpassed 90%.”

“...Hmph. And I am saying that it is a problem that this number is pushed down all the way to 18% when the wasteland requests are added to the equation. Isn’t that proof that a great number of the requests brought here that denote the wasteland are not being properly done by the adventurers that are based here?”

“But...Representative, there’s not many adventurers who can come and go to the wasteland stably. When an adventurer that can complete a decent amount of requests appears, they normally end up dying. Lately, the Lime Latte group that showed the best results seem to not be accepting much requests...”

“Enough! I don’t want to hear excuses all day long. We really do have to establish a department that is specialized in the wasteland and change the way of dealing with it from right down the roots. But even if we want to make countermeasures, the amount of adventurers who can instruct in regards to the basics of the wasteland...”

The Representative muttered the latter half with his expression still dark.

“...”

“From within this month’s deaths in the wasteland, how many of them didn’t fulfill the level requirement?”

“If we go by the corpses we managed to confirm the social position of, it is around 170.”

“Even when the level requirement is placed for their own sake, they can’t even follow that huh. The allure of a place where fortune lies might be great, but this is just...”

The top of the Adventurer Guild in Tsige, Luther, made a long and heavy sigh.

The pain of being unable to properly fulfill the duty of an Adventurer Guild was visible from the wrinkles formed between his eyebrows.

After a while, he exhales silently as if changing gears.

“Truly saddening.” (Luther)

“...”

“Those numbers are not something we can’t report to the higher-ups though. They are not problems we can resolve immediately by doing just one thing after all.” (Luther)

“Y-Yes.”

“Well then, please tackle seriously the illegal entries to the wasteland by working together with branches in the area.” (Luther)

“Yes!”

“You can leave now.” (Luther)

“U-Uhm...”

His superior had announced the end of this tense time, but the man didn’t nod, and instead, slightly furrowed his brows and speaks in a reserved manner.

It is because his superior didn’t question a part he thought strange of the things that were reported.

An irregular report.

It wasn’t the report about the usual numbers and the progress of things.

And so, a part of the reason why he was in front of an elite of the Adventurer Guild was exactly because he wanted to have a discussion in regards to the details of this abnormality.

“What is it?” (Luther)

“Actually, there are a few people who have recently registered as adventurers...”

“If it is about the matter of the level not increasing, I will take care of that. This should go without saying but, it is strictly prohibited to make this public.”

(Luther)

“You will take care of it?”

“Please make the information of him and his surroundings as highly classified. I will most likely be dealing with it officially in the near future.” (Luther)

“...What does that mean?”

“No need to stress over it. It is fine for you to just forget about this matter. That’s all I mean. If I had to put it in simpler terms, it means that you have to take care not to let your tongue slip to the skilled adventurer group that you have been in good terms with for quite a good while and has been making strange movements lately. That’s all I have to say.” (Luther)

“Hih! I-I will be taking my leave!!”

Finishing the report, the man, that had been acting slightly against the rules as a guild personnel, was shocked by the fact that his actions were known, and he immediately decided to leave.

The only one remaining in the room was the representative that didn’t change his posture from beginning to end.

“An adventurer that doesn’t show changes in his level huh. An error in the illusory system, or maybe some sort of curse? Let’s observe him for a bit, and depending on the situation, I may have to report to the boss at Rotsgard. This only smells like trouble though.” (Luther)

A single person surfaces in the mind of the representative.

The figure of a certain man that, if his memory serves right, hasn’t changed in appearance since the time he was a child.

“Good grief. Lime forgetting his duty as an adventurer and biting at the Rembrandt Company; the wasteland having a mountain of requests; the adventurers that don’t have strength, and yet, chase after the possibilities in the wasteland and end up dead; the requests far from being able to reach the 70% completion, can’t even reach the 20% completion. Having these many problems actually makes it comical instead.” (Luther)

With a tone that one can tell the exhaustion in it, the representative looks at

the ceiling.

“I wonder if a super adventurer, knight, or mage can move to Tsige and mediate the Rembrandt Company and Lime’s dispute, and while at it, solve the problem of the Rembrandt Company consequently fixing the mood of Patrick-dono, and also take a bundle of requests and solve them all. Such an existence that holds enough power to nurture the path of the stagnating adventurers.” (Luther)

The representative mutters a monologue that was filled to the brim with wishful thinking.

There’s no doubt that he is in a really high standing, but at the same time, it is also an exhausting job.

It is certain that he is currently in a slightly dangerous state.

“If only the rumoured Dragon Slayer were to come to the wasteland and kill the Superior Dragon there, or the super strong mercenary group that is shut in at Lorel Union coming here and fighting the mamonos and demi-humans in the wasteland. Hah...if only the Goddess-sama were to send us a hero to deal with the wasteland as she did with the demon race...” (Luther)

His thoughts had already reached the point where there was no logic to it and it was closer to delusions.

“...No good. It is obvious that I will be collapsing first before any of these were to be fulfilled. If, on top of that, such a troublesome existence were to be thrown into Tsige, I would just explode. By dutifully working on the job in front of me, and polishing my abilities little by little everyday, the future will definitely turn for the better, and in time, all problems will be resolved; that was my belief -my support. But the work in Tsige doesn’t seem like it has any end. I want to answer the expectations of my boss. I do honestly want to improve the guild in this town. But really, what should I even be doing...” (Luther)

Even when knowing those ideals will not be reached, he had no choice but to do what he can.

In the end, as if he had been on the verge of surrendering many times

already, the representative reached the same conclusion.

The caring of the adventurers, the treatment of the requests, and the dealing of the town; the preservation of the connections they have in order to make all those points move smoothly.

The Adventurer Guild of Tsige was slowly being cornered.

It is a situation where it wouldn't have been strange for the guild to have fallen a long time ago. The reason why it has managed to continue standing was obviously because of the reliable staff members and how capable the representative is.

Will his pain be rewarded, or will he end up being crushed by the work?

That answer would be appearing soon.

He still didn't know that the exit of that long tunnel was close.

Extra Story XXXVI: Manga SS – Doing their best in the request

The wasteland called the World's Border.

It is the most dangerous area in this world, and there's only one proper way to enter it —through the gate of the remote town of Tsige.

In order to obtain a permission to cross it, there's the need to fulfill a variety of requirements depending on your profession.

Of course, they are all strict.

But in regards to the adventurers, there's only one simple requirement; to have a higher level than the specified one.

“This place is disastrous as always.” (Toa)

At a glance, it looks like a peaceful sight where it is filled with green and the sound of a small stream can be heard. In this place, the female adventurer Toa spoke with a bitter laugh.

She had a strange expression that showed weariness and pity in it.

“...I can’t say much of others, but I agree.” (Luisa)

One of the members of Toa’s party, the elf archer Luisa, responded to Toa with slight difficulty.

The place they are in has a distance that would take half a day from Tsige.

Toa, Luisa, Ranina, and Hazal; these four were in Tsige for the sake of investigating.

“This is unexpected. To think that you were in the same opinion of this ‘graveyard for illegal trespassers’.” (Ranina)

The small woman, Ranina, that lightly shouldered a big axe that contrasted her small size, looked up at Luisa.

Just like she said, contrary to the looks of the place, it is secretly known by the adventurers as one of the graveyards.

Specially the people that entered the wasteland even when they lack in level and are overconfident of their own strength, going even through the lengths of entering through illegal means; they end up being hunted by the sly mamonos of the wasteland.

“...’Levels are simply numbers’. I was against the guild because they assumed my power from something like that. Now that I think about it, I can say that I was incredibly stupid and arrogant.” (Luisa)

Luisa is also one of the people that entered the wasteland illegally.

She may still be alive, but the difference between the people that died in this place and her is simply a bit better luck, and the current her knows it and accepts it. The reality that it is by no means because she is a chosen one or anything like that.

Leaving aside whether Ranina caught onto that thought of Luisa, she nodded lightly a number of times, and was hearing her out.

“Toa, there’s a reaction from over there.” (Hazal)

From slightly further back from the three, the alchemist hyuman, Hazal, was holding an object similar to that of a compass, and called Toa.

“Ok. Then, let’s cut it a bit. [Breeze Razor].” (Toa)

Toa swings her dagger at the same time as she said the skill name.

At the area where Hazal had pointed out, the place where grass that reached all the way to the knees was being cut down.

It is one of the dagger skills of the thief class.

In the time when she had just learned it, it was a weak skill that could only be used to pickpocket, but when she reached to dark thief, adventurers on that level can use their skills deftly to achieve a variety of things more. Well, rather than calling it a battle skill, it still more of a life convenience skill.

“...Oh, bones —and equipment huh.” (Toa)

From the reddish ground that had been laid bare, there was quite the number of bones from many people.

Also, there was a type of equipment there that could be said to be their trademark.

“At a glance, this looks like a place that is suited for camping at night after all. If they had properly gathered information beforehand, there’s dangers that you can avoid...” (Toa)

Toa mutters this while rummaging the equipment.

“The despicable part about this place is that it looks as if it would be the best location to catch a break. Mamonos don’t approach much at noon after all.” (Luisa)

Following after Toa, Luisa also took an article of the area that had the grass cut off, and then, lets out a small sigh.

“The reality is that this is a trap that troublesome mamonos, who love human flesh, use to lure them here. When night hits, mamonos that are two steps stronger than the usual mamonos would come out to devour the adventurers that have lowered their guard camping at night.” (Ranina)

“It is a good example of mamonos being able to use their brain too. Well, most of the guys that end up like this don’t know about such things, and by the time they do notice, it is already unavoidable death.” (Hazal)

Ranina and Hazal's task is to be on guard of the surroundings.

"Toa, what should we do with the equipment aside from the guild cards?"
(Luisa)

"All things aside from our target...let's gather them on a level that's not pushing it. I have a certain degree of knowledge in swords and daggers so: Hazal, you are in charge of items like amulets; Luisa, magic power endowed items; Ranina, you check if there's any items that are related to Spirits. But first, let's gather it all." (Toa)

After thinking for a bit, Toa gives out the orders.

They don't think of taking the articles of the dead adventurers as an evil deed.

Specially for the things that are found in the wasteland. They are side-benefits, and it is thought of as providing strength to the successive adventurers.

In regards to the guild card, there's a few mamonos and demi-humans that like to gather things like that, but normally, most just search if there's anything to eat and everything else is left alone together with their bones.

If you bring back the card of a dead one to the guild, you can get a reward that's not small.

You get to bulk up in items, you can get gratitude, and moreover, you get rewarded.

If a wasteland adventurer finds bones, the first thing they search for is their guild card.

But there are times when the family of the dead adventurers wish for their articles as mementos of them.

The request that Toa and her party are doing is one of them.

A request of an adventurer's parents that had been hinted to them that she would be going to the wasteland, and then, disappeared right after.

They wanted news of their daughter, and if she is dead, they wanted them to search for some sort of memento.

By the stage of investigating at the town, all four of Toa's party had already reached the same conclusion —that person is dead.

Entering the wasteland illegally, and in the end, hunted by mamonos.

In the wasteland, mamonos are not simply existences that serve to be hunted by people, they are also existences that hunt people; this is a reality that these four know all too well.

And then, after entering the wasteland, Hazal used the hair of the girl to guide him, and they got general idea of her location.

"I am also somewhat knowledgeable about weapons. I will help out." (Ranina)

"Thanks, Ranina..... Hm, everyone, sadly to say, I have found it. Dana Yuel, level 81, Axe Guard; it matches with her day of disappearance." (Toa)

Toa holds up a guild card in her hand.

"...Then, next would be the article listed—" (Hazal)

"I have found that too. A blue jeweled earring. It matches the design in the list completely." (Toa)

"Even though this place is way too fast for even a level 90... That Dana, talk about living fast and recklessly." (Ranina)

Before Hazal could take out the list of the articles, Toa showed a pair of earrings with two small blue jewels on her opposite hand.

Ranina spoke of Dana adding a sigh to it.

"We have finished the request then. Okay, let's finish the retrieval of the items and leave this place while the sun is still up. We still have the next collection request." (Toa)

"...Right. Avenging their deaths is not part of our job. It wouldn't leave a good taste if we had to go that far after all." (Luisa)

Luisa nods at Toa's words.

"Now that I think about it, the matter of the Ruby Eye, what do you think of it?" (Ranina)

"Ah, that. Lime Latte is apparently involved in it. He wasn't supposed to be

the villainous type though..... Well, I don't want to get involved." (Toa)

After the sudden topic Ranina threw out, Toa placed a hand on her mouth as if trying to remember something recent.

"Hmm, I handed over those eyes to Kuzunoha-san before I got a warning from them. In other words, we were still unrelated to it at that time." (Luisa)

Luisa nods several times as if agreeing with Toa.

"If we were to join their side as fellow adventurers...we would be facing Kuzunoha-san. No way. It is the best choice to just be docile and fulfill the requests." (Hazal)

Looks like Hazal also agreed with the policy of the party.

"We recently started working again, and we have a crazy big debt with Kuzunoha-san. Just like they say, let's stay unrelated to it." (Toa)

""""Agree.""""

'If you don't want to get involved in trouble, don't approach the Ruby Eye request of the Rembrandt Company', this warning that had the influential adventurers of Tsige involved had soon been told to Toa and the others who had just returned to Tsige.

The four obediently nodded at this, but the reason was heavily different from what they think.

The reason why they decided not to be related.

The time the name Kuzunoha will be known in the town of Tsige will be in a slightly further future.

Extra Story XXXVII: Manga SS – Her a little later

"Ahchii!"

"...What's with that pretentious sneeze? This is our house though. There's only Onee-chan and I, you know?"

"I heard that this was supposed to have incredible effects in healing nature. But it didn't work at all..."

"There's no way you will get an effect like that from someone of your same gender, moreover, your little sister."

The girl that had both hands placed on her waist and opening both her legs widely, had her anger waning, and weariness took place, making her shoulders droop a bit.

In front of her, there's her sister that is showing a sight she rarely shows outside, doing a seiza.

The one who made a supposedly cute sneeze was the elder sister.

"Rinon~, someone must have been talking about me at this nice timing. How about forgiving me and leaving it at that~. Your Onee-chan is not good at seiza~."

Her elder sister, Toa, was showing a bitter smile as she moved her paining legs.

It was a gesture that showed her legs were numbing.

"I am making you do that because you are not good at it!" (Rinon)

"Ehehe, the people talking about me must be talking about how it is a nice sign that a capable and generous adventurer has returned from the wasteland with materials" (Toa)

"...If that's where you are taking it, it would be that there's a capable and generous sucker. Right here!" (Rinon)

"Uwu... But an adventurer cannot compromise with their equipment and personal belongings. If there's things there, and there's money, there's only one choice!" (Toa)

"I can understand that it can't be helped since you are an adventurer. But everything at once is no good, you know? You have fulfilled a number of wasteland requests after returning, and yet, this amount of expenses is way too much!" (Rinon)

Toa was pushed the household expenses list on her face for who knows how

many times, and she hung her head down at that.

“Why did Kuzunoha-san teach such detailed arithmetic to Rinon. It is amazing how Rinon managed to learn it, but I am not happy. The only thing I can tell with a look is that we still have money.” (Toa)

“Onee-chan! You can tell?!” (Rinon)

“Yes! I think we still have quite a bit of money left!” (Toa)

“We don’t! At this rate, in just a month, the money of the materials will be gone!” (Rinon)

“It is okay. I am not going to be using that much money anymore. We are going to be making even more money now after all.” (Toa)

Rinon’s older sister, the adventurer Toa, raised her head with an expression filled with confidence as if saying it is by no means an excuse.

And in reality, after returning to Tsige, they have been finishing wasteland requests at a pretty fast pace.

Coincidentally, there was an employee of the Merchant Guild that called Toa and the others ‘capable and generous adventurers’.

Well, sadly to say, at a number of stores she went to, she is being called a ‘capable and generous sucker’.

They need to enter the wasteland, and yet, they avoid the requests that require travelling far or need several days to complete. Currently, in terms of work, Toa and her party are showing efficiency that surpasses their rank.

“Please do so, Onee-chan. From now on, I will have you gain at least this much money every month, okay?!” (Rinon)

“Eeh?!” (Toa)

“Of course, for a while, don’t do reckless things like travelling far!” (Rinon)

“No way, that’s unreasonable...” (Toa)

“You managed to have your life saved, so this time, be more careful, and be precise.” (Rinon)

Rinon changes gears into being purely worried about her sister.

She cannot forget the fact that she was close to dying at the inside of the wasteland because her ability was not enough.

But, even with that, her little sister knew that her sister has no intentions of stopping as an adventurer. Rinon knows that there's an objective her sister cannot give up on that's hidden inside of her after all.

That's why, at the very least, she wants her to gain strength in a reliable manner, and aim for the deep parts of the wasteland after having prepared plenty enough.

That's how Rinon thinks.

"Rinon..." (Toa)

"Onee-chan..." (Rinon)

"With that income threshold, I would only be able to take one break a week. Only having one day to rest when I am doing my very best is way too rough on —" (Toa)

"Looks like we can increase our savings." (Rinon)

"Hih! Has Rinon been infected by the numbers?! In the first place, what will you do by saving that much money? Even if equipment requires money, there's no need to prepare to that extent! Are you thinking of buying a house? I will be aiming for a bit of an extravagant house, you know?!" (Toa)

"...That's right." (Rinon)

"Eh?" (Toa)

"We will definitely be staying in this town for long. Maybe we will be spending our lives here. That's why, let's not stay at inns like this and buy a house." (Rinon)

"...Rinon-chan? Hello?" (Toa)

The sudden joke of Toa was answered with a straight agreement from her sister, catching Toa off-guard.

"Also, let's make it a big house. A house that can become the home for Onee-chan and I, and also everyone from the party." (Rinon)

“Wa.” (Toa)

“With a place to return to, with comrades that you have a deep enough trust to be able to live together with, you would be a bit less reckless, right?” (Rinon)

“As I said, the savings...” (Toa)

“I know that Onee-chan still has lingering attachments in the wasteland, and that there’s something left you have to do. But if after we were saved by Kuzunoha-san, we were to continue doing things like we have before, one day, we will definitely trip. I don’t want Onee-chan to end up like that.” (Rinon)

“...Yeah, I get it.” (Toa)

“Of course, I will be working as well. I asked the people of the Adventurer Guild and they allowed me to draw portraits of others in front of the guild, at the main street. And I am in the middle of checking if I can do some sort of job with the arithmetic that Kuzunoha-san taught me.” (Rinon)

“If it is that much, Onee-chan will try even harder. You have gotten this good at numbers after only being taught a bit by Kuzunoha-san. For the sake of the future, I would like Rinon to study somewhere—” (Toa)

“There’s practically no place in Tsige that’s focused in teaching. If there’s one, it is not that different from being the apprentice of a company. This is the town of adventurers and merchants after all. In that case, it is better to work in front of the guild where I can wait for the return of Onee-chan. Also, I might be able to obtain connections with some company with my arithmetic knowledge. In the first place, the house is for me as well, so it is a matter of course that I should be working as well.” (Rinon)

“You have grown, Rinon.” (Toa)

“With that kind of experience, of course I would. We seriously managed to survive by a hair’s breadth.” (Rinon)

Rinon was looking at the ceiling with distant eyes.

She was looking back at the experience she had in the base inside the wasteland where they experienced the very definition of being at the edge of their life, and also, their miraculous encounter.

“I really am reflecting about it.” (Toa)

“I think Onee-chan already understands but, the meeting with Kuzunoha-san was truly a miracle, okay? There’s no big turnabout like this a second time, okay?” (Rinon)

“That’s something I and everyone else understand pretty well.” (Toa)

“Then, work. Also, confirm. Don’t get involved with matters of the Kuzunoha Company and the Rembrandt Company, and also, the places where disappearances are frequent.” (Rinon)

“I am following that devoutly. With those in consideration, I will increase my rank, and aim to become a regular adventurer that can stably finish requests in the highest of lists.” (Toa)

“In that case, I will forgive you for this time’s absurd expense. BUT! I will be properly keeping tabs of the monthly income and expenses, okay?!” (Rinon)

Kuzunoha-san managed to teach Rinon in a short amount of time the technique to efficiently supervise the income and expenses as well as a mysteriously high level of arithmetic.

Toa has incredible gratitude towards him.

She does, but just in this one point alone, she can’t help but resent him.

Extra Story XXXVIII: Manga SS – Anomaly in the forest

The adventurers that are affiliated with the Adventurer Guild are in essence always under the risk of dying.

But when they leave a settlement to do their job, it is not as if they are always in a battle with their life at the edge all the time. Lowering their guards and being arrogant are not options, and the requests have their own rank with their respective difficulties.

Of course, they won't always continuously take jobs that are close to their abilities.

In other words, even the adventurers in Tsige that require the best of abilities have jobs that fall into the category of 'you can get money' and 'are easy'. Even in the wasteland that is bounds and leaps different in level from other places, it was no exception.

One of those is the forest that one can see as soon as they leave Tsige and enter the wasteland.

Some level of security has been secured in the path towards the forest, and the distance is not that big of a deal.

As of now, there hasn't been any reports of specially dangerous monsters in the way to the forest. Because the wasteland is incredibly vast, no one has reached the deepest parts of it yet, but just with this, you could even call that place an oasis in the wasteland. But it doesn't stop to only that. That forest even has a number of valuable plants and trees.

You can train there, serves as a gauge of your strength, on top of that, you can get income from it.

Many adventurers head to this forest, and it goes without saying that they endeavour in their job and training.

Of course, it is now a famous place where wasteland beginners and

intermediate ones gather.

And so, the forest is named Tinarack Forest coming from the most popular material gathered there, the Tinarack grass.

There's currently a situation happening at that place.

The adventurers heading to the Tinarack Forest are not returning.

There's not really any problem if a beginner party were to be wiped out on their way to the forest.

People would only brush it off as 'they overestimated themselves' and there wouldn't be a shred of pity for them.

That they didn't have the required ability yet to enter the wasteland.

But when even an intermediate class party that had the objective of getting money there had all not returned, the story changes.

Even the Adventurer Guild went 'huh?'.

On top of that, if seven days continue without any Tinarack Forest requests being completed, there's already a clear abnormal situation.

The guild formed an investigation team with scholars and skilled fighters that wouldn't mess up even by mistake and they had them head to the forest. They are divided in bodyguards and investigation team, but there's three specialized mages and alchemists in total, and three adventurers specially good in battle

It is true that it was hurriedly formed, but even with that, the three combat specialized ones are all within the top 10 of Tsige, and the scholars have also been acknowledged in battle and research.

In the guild's eyes, they thought they had sent out a completely foolproof team.

"Weaklingthieves got so arrogant they lowered their guards, what a joke~. Are they sane by acting separately?"

"Weaklingthieves?"

"It is the word I came up with with my high naming sense. It is unexpectedly nice, you know. To shorten it, it would be weakling. Or thieves?"

“Eris, the combination is gone...”

“...Ah, right.” (Eris)

A small shadow was having a tensionless conversation as she stepped on a fallen adventurer.

The person she was talking to is tall compared to her and she was also kicking the fallen scholar without mercy.

His body was sent flying in a manner unbelievable of a hyuman body, and he stops after hitting a specially big tree.

Looking properly, there were two others there who had lost consciousness.

It is the deed of these two demi-humans.

“Hmph, looks like the last two have noticed us. They seem to be a cut above the rest of these thieves.” (Eris)

“There’s apparently a hyuman town called Tsige not far from here. It is the base of the adventurers. That must mean they have noticed the strange situation in this forest they have been doing whatever they want in.”

‘That’s why strong adventurers have come’, is what the tall one deduced.

“It really gets me, you know~. Doing whatever they want to the forest we prepared. Do they know how much trouble it was to make it grow this much? Do they think this big of a forest appeared miraculously?” (Eris)

“Hmph, hyumans just know about stealing. They are the favorite children of the Goddess after all.”

“Ahaha~. In that case, we are the farmers? Like, growing the trees and plants for the sake of the hyuman-samas? Are their brains made of flowers and cherries or something?” (Eris)

“...It is because our ancestors didn’t like that that they ended up isolating themselves in such a remote place. I don’t know what the elves are thinking by coexisting with them, but I think we are far apart.”

“Umu umu. Akua’s straightlaced self is the same as always. Hm?” (Eris)

“What’s the matter, Eris?” (Akua)

Letting out a fake-looking ‘hoh~’, the demi-human Eris looks at a certain direction of the forest.

“The remaining two have a decent decision-making ability.” (Eris)

“?”

“They are planning on prioritizing the report of the situation rather than saving their comrades.” (Eris)

“...How troublesome.” (Akua)

“No no, I think that’s actually a great decision..... If their opponents weren’t us, and if this wasn’t our forest, that is.” (Eris)

“Hmph, that’s right. I will be dealing with the one that moves well. Eris, you go for...” (Akua)

“The mage or scholar-looking one, right? Understood.” (Eris)

With a bold smile, Akua holds her bow in hand and runs through the forest without looking back at Eris.

Eris, on the other hand, began chanting the aria of a spell like a song, and with her short staff, she twirls it around as if playing with it and returns it to her waist, and then, links both of her hands at the back of her head and began to walk.

By the time the baton twirling moves of hers were over, her aria had already finished.

“Good grief. It had been a while since we returned to harvest the things, and what do we find? Adventurers are truly the type that pop out from wherever. What a real pain.” (Eris)

Eris walks for a while in the forest while mumbling.

That’s right. The forest Tsige calls as Tinarack Forest is actually a forest that the race of theirs had cultivated for a long time. Its vegetation was something that had been planned beforehand.

Looking at it from Akua and Eris’ perspective, hyumans are simply noxious insects that have stepped into their fields and are stealing their crops as they

wish.

When the comparison of them being the farmers and the hyumans being the noxious insects was established, the relationship between them was decided.

A relationship where elimination is the ideal solution.

That's all there is to it.

"Most of them were weaklings, but they were sly, and there were some that were actually pretty strong. Once you see one, there's more crawling around. It is a real pain. Do you understand that? Wait, there's no way you would." (Eris)

Eris stops her feet and looks up.

There was a single man there caught on the branches of a tree that were extending in a strange manner.

A hyuman man.

The spell that she had done while twirling her staff and chanting an aria had already caught him.

There were no other presences in the area, and it looks like the companion that was with him had prioritized escaping the forest.

The caught man was pathetically resisting.

"So you guys...you guys are the abnormalities that have been lurking in the Tinarack Forest!"

"Tinarack Forest? ...Hah...it really saps my strength. Truly a pain~." (Eris)

"?"

"In the first place, there's no abnormality here. You guys are the noxious insects here. This place is a medicinal plant garden that we Forest Onis have been managing since forever. It is one of our gardens." (Eris)

"What?...A child? Forest Oni?"

Maybe because he is in a situation where it is despairingly low that he can be released from his bindings, the hyuman scholar questioned the demi-human.

But her appearance and her answer to his question were all unexpected, so

the man had fallen into slight confusion.

“...I have lived several times longer than you. Oh well, who cares. You must be an alchemist, scholar, or a brewer. There’s something I want to ask.” (Eris)

“U-Uh? I am a scholar that specializes in the plants for magic drugs. Name’s Ab Turner.”

“I didn’t ask for your name. And so, the Tsige adventurers are calling this place Tinarack Forest?” (Eris)

“That’s...right.”

“In other words, it is connected to the tinarack flax -no, the tinarack grass that grows lushly right in this forest?” (Eris)

“Yeah, well, this Tinarack Forest is not limited to that, it also has other valuable plants, so there must be even more valuable plants deeper inside, but...”

The answer of the man made Eris sigh heavily.

She was clearly showing disappointment.

“Meaning that, for you guys, this place is a miraculous forest that conveniently has a big amount of valuable plants sleeping in it? Plant scholar, Turner-kun?” (Eris)

Eris shows a half-smile with droopy eyes as she looked at the scholar that was still caught in the plants.

“We thought it was the miracle of the Goddess. We saw it as one of the treasures sleeping in the wasteland.”

“And this is supposed to be a scholar. Truly irreparable.” (Eris)

Eris mutters and shrugs her shoulders with a ‘good grief’.

“Hey, you seem to be someone we can communicate with, so can you please release me? There might be a misunderstanding here. But once we talk it out, we could reach an understanding and find a point of compromise.”

“Chi chi chi, even if you tell me that while secretly forming an aria in ancient language, it doesn’t have any sort of persuasion.” (Eris)

“?!”

“By the way, the very fact that a forest exists inside the messed up climate of the wasteland is already a miracle. Leaving aside the fact that it is in a spot where the climate is stable.” (Eris)

“Wa?”

“Do you think there’s such a convenient situation where a forest this grown with so much vegetation and variety of plants are coexisting and many of them are valuable medicinal plants and fruits can exist?” (Eris)

“T-That’s...”

“No way in hell. Our ancestors poured their hearts and souls to cultivate this forest, and yet, you enter as if you own the place, and stole as you pleased.” (Eris)

For a moment, the eyes of Eris showed a cold and sharp anger as it pierced through the man.

It was truly only an instant. Soon after, it returned to the droopy and listless eyes, but the man felt shivers that he hadn’t tasted before.

“I-It is a misunderstanding. In the first place, we didn’t know this forest was owned by someone!”

“Must be~. Because you guys don’t even know at all for what this forest is being a garden for.” (Eris)

“?”

“...Deep in here, we are cultivating crimson flowers. This is a garden that has everything prepared to protect it. Well, there’s no one within us Forest Onis that go by ‘ignorance means innocence’. I will have you pay for your sin.” (Eris)

“Crimson flower? No, wait. Wait, please! Pay for my sin?! Don’t tell me, you plan on killing me?!”

Ab Turner had reacted sensitively to the ‘pay for your sins’ that Eris has spoken a little after he had sent shivers down his spine.

Rather than the plant that he has no recollection of but was definitely a

valuable plant, he was more worried of his own fate.

90% of the missing people are dead. This reaction was a natural one.

“Kill? No way. If you had touched the crimson flowers, then I would have killed a number of you guys, but...I wouldn’t mindlessly kill the Hyuman-samas.” (Eris)

“You are not going to kill me? But I did hear that a lot of people have gone missing...”

“Fortunately, you haven’t touched the important things, and also, you did what you did without knowing. Yeah yeah, there’s room for mercy. Most of the intruders until now have not ‘died’, you know?” (Eris)

“What?! Is that true?!”

Eris speaks with clear hidden meanings, but the man had no leeway to calmly notice that.

“I am not a hyuman, so I don’t lie unless it is necessary. I am simply having everyone help in the work of us Forest Onis.” (Eris)

“So, manual labor huh. You guys are more intelligent than I thought.”

“...Yeah, you will be a part of the forest for a while. And so, I will have you sleep for a bit. By the time you wake up, you will be at the location.” (Eris)

“? N, this is a...sleeping...”

Turner fell asleep, and his bindings came undone.

But Eris didn’t catch his falling body and simply watched as his body fell on the ground and made a dull sound.

“The Forest Oni children know more about the forest than you do, self-proclaimed scholar. This is a nice chance, so learn about the forest with that body of yours.” (Eris)

The small Forest Oni twirls her small staff.

When she did that, the grass stretched like vines and wrapped the body of the man.

“Ooh, you were already done too, Eris.” (Akua)

Eris reacts to the voice coming from her right, and there was Akua there.

She had no injuries as she carried the adventurer on her right shoulder.

“...Akua, how barbaric. You turned him into a complete beehive. Is he even alive?” (Eris)

“He is. There would be no point if he weren’t after all.” (Akua)

Akua shook the man that had received heavy piercing damage, and he groaned slightly.

It was close to a reflexive reaction. His consciousness hasn’t returned.

But it was clear that he had been defeated in a harsh manner.

Just in what way was he pierced with so many arrows.

“Right. It is fine as long as they are alive. Then, let’s return. There was a high number this time around, so let’s have the standby team help out.” (Eris)

“Yeah, Shishou will be incredibly happy. We gotta have them work for the amount that the adventurers have devastated after all.” (Akua)

“Exactly~.” (Eris)

The two brown skinned girls that called themselves Forest Onis disappear inside the forest as if melting with it.

The disappearance incident of the Tinarack Forest continued.

The guild’s investigation team had fallen victim as well, and it continued to silently devour the adventurers.

Extra Story XXXIX: Manga SS – Crawling Redemption

“Lime Latte huh. What a problem that guy is as well.”

At the time when Misumi Makoto was strangely beginning to feel the appeal of the thin banana juice, at a high class restaurant in the central section of

Tsige.

A meeting was taking place inside this store where you can't enter unless you have an invitation; a place that commoners cannot be seen entering.

There were no others aside from them, it was completely reserved.

There were four humans old to young of varying ages. They were continuing their talk without giving a single impression about the food that was being brought out.

A man mutters with an expression as if he had bitten a bitter bug.

Within that conversation, the name of Lime Latte came out.

He is currently the man that has the highest rank and level in the Adventurer Guild of Tsige.

"Even if we are to eliminate him, there's no substitute for him. The only thing we can do is tolerate it."

The only woman in the group that seemed to be in her thirties made a bitter smile as she nodded.

But well, she is the youngest within the group.

From the other three, one is at his late thirties, and the remaining two are over fifty years old.

"But the decision of the Merchant Guild this time affects the adventurers heavily. Even if they are at a higher position, in the end, adventurers are the ones who are actually working out on the field, so it can't be helped that they are against it."

"Gathering requests that are not sent to the Adventurer Guild but rather the Merchant Guild. For Lime and the other adventurers who raise adventurers, it is basically like stealing their jobs, or so they say..."

The second youngest in the group nodded at the words of the old man that has a white beard.

No one was showing a bright expression.

It was clear that it wasn't a fun topic.

“But it is certainly a necessary thing to do in order to have a stable way to supply those materials at a low price. It is true that this does mean taking away the job of a certain part of the adventurers.”

“Even though this decision has practically nothing to do with Lime Latte. Complaints have come from a problematic place.”

“There’s people that are voicing out if there’s a need for low level adventurers here in the first place. High level adventurers gather here from the whole world with the wasteland as their objective. Shouldn’t Tsige be fine with that kind of image?”

“If there’s small requests that can be bought with money without the need of going through the Adventurer Guild...it would be more convenient that way. For us, the low level adventurers are also important customers, but if this means that the low level standard decreases and more higher level ones come, there’s no problem.”

“In other words, it is quite the logical and efficient plan, and that’s exactly why it was accepted. As a result of this, even the bunch that are weeded out have gotten referrals to neighboring towns! Just what are they displeased about?!”

“Really, everyone profits from this. It is a splendid plan fitting of that personage.”

“...Umu.”

The moment the word ‘that personage’ had come out, a small instant of silence happened, and the bearded man gives his agreement.

“And yet, that man and the adventurers that got influenced by him have ignored close to half of the wasteland requests, moreover, the requests centering the Rembrandt Company, that are the center of this time’s plan, are being completely ignored.”

“If that were all there is to it, it wouldn’t warrant us to gather though...”

It was as if he were saying ‘we would have been able to overlook it’.

“They have gone crazy. To even go as far as joining hands with who-knows-

who and using a curse disease. Moreover, it is a sleep curse disease that even the church can't do anything about."

"...I wonder about that. That's what Rembrandt-sama publicly stated but, is it really true? If it were a curse disease of that level, there's no way the church wouldn't be able to treat it."

"No one has seen his wife and daughters since then after all. There's the possibility that it is a curse disease that affects the outward appearance. In that case, I would be able to understand why he lied with the future in consideration. He has two daughters in their teens after all."

"As usual, there's no detailed information huh."

"Yeah. All the people that are taking care of them are extremely loyal employees. How envying."

"What about the mage?"

"No good. It has been long since traces of him have been cut off. So the Rembrandt Company has already captured him huh... he might have died already."

"If it is the latter, it is bad. If they have captured the mage, and yet, the situation has not been resolved, things are serious."

The conversation continues with a heavy mood exactly as the word 'serious' depicts.

The dessert had been served just recently and the food course was already done.

The tea cup had steam coming out from it, and it was at least giving a nice scent to the place.

Sadly, the conversation didn't reach anything close to a big turnabout though.

"At any rate, the elimination of Lime is basically a set fact. If adventurers that can replace him are raised, we can immediately inact that. If the time comes and there's no replacement, it might be necessary though."

"Understood. There's actually a party we can expect great things from that have just returned from the wasteland. The wait might not be long."

“Ara? This is my first time hearing of this.”

“It is apparently a party with a dark thief called Toa as their leader. Just the other day, they came with an outrageous amount of valuable materials and sold them generously. They are also active in completing requests, and for now, there’s nothing to complain about them.”

“Then, in the near future, the countermeasure for the Lime in question... If we were to go with the straightforward method, there’s no doubt that our side will receive heavy damage.”

“Even if we were to use the best assassins we have at hand, it would be tough to assassinate him in the wasteland. Even so, if we were to try eliminating him in town, who knows how much groundwork and preparations we would need to do. It really gives me a headache.”

“If it is about that, I have some interesting info. I was keeping an eye on the money movements of Lime Latte, and there has been a place where he has been sending quite an amount of money with pretty high caution.”

“Oh? Where is it? If it is a financial organization, he could have them store the money. If it is a woman or an illegitimate child, we might be able to take them hostage. If we can find a weakness, the methods we can take will increase.”

“The place is...”

The woman stopped her words for a moment, and then, she showed the best and worst smile as she continued.

“The Wades orphanage.”

The moment the name of the establishment was voiced out by her, everyone made that same smile.



“Fuh...”

The man that was left on his own had let out a heavy sigh.

(Who knows how many times we have had meetings like this. Seriously, a hidden face is not something nice to have. Specially the kind that takes away the lives of others. It is like something heavy accumulates deep inside one’s

stomach. It accumulates, accumulates, and doesn't disappear. The Goddess probably won't forgive me for the things I have done.)

It is one of the four, from within the two fifty years old, the one without the beard.

Different from the other three, he didn't leave the store even when business was over.

No, there was no need to leave.

Because it is the store he owns after all.

"Did the talk not go well?"

The woman that served alcohol to the man spoke to him.

At some point in time, two women with the same face were standing at both sides of him.

The ones who were bringing out the food were also these two women.

For him, they are also people who know about his behind-the-scenes face and can share his secrets with.

Just that...

"No. The topic of dealing with Lime has progressed."

"...Is that so. Congratulations."

"Jona Faren was the one who sniffed out that information. The fact that he is sending a big amount of money to the Wades Orphanage. He was cautious about it, but it looks like he couldn't escape from the information network of that woman. It happens all the time, but it is still impressive."

While praising the woman called Jona, he also felt fear towards the person behind the truth of the curse disease attacking Rembrandt's wife and daughters that not even she could catch information of.

"?!"

"...That's the place where I picked you girls up, right? I will ask before there's any obstacles. Did you know about this?"

The man spoke clearly.

There was no condemning in his tone.

"No. We didn't know at all that Lime Latte and the Wades Orphanage had some sort of relationship, but..."

"But' what?"

He urges a response.

"I did hear a rumor that a wealthy person was sending big donations regularly."

"Donations to an orphanage huh. It is truly something that doesn't fit him. I see. So the identity of that wealthy person is Lime."

The two twins went silent.

There's no doubt that the wealthy person is Lime.

It was a complicated feeling, but there were no objections voiced out in regards to the elimination of Lime, in other words, the assassination of Lime.

"I adopted you both from that orphanage. I was only thinking of bringing Keema, but as consideration of your clinging and crying to me, I also took your sister Carol under my wing as well. Looks like that decision was a big success."

Because both of them ended up being incredibly competent in their jobs.

For the man, this was a welcome happening.

"Yes. We are truly grateful for that, Bilky-sama."

"But the one who saved you girls before me and had allowed you to live longer was Lime who was donating to the orphanage. That's what has been made clear. Even with that, will you two still be able to serve under me with gratitude? Even when you will be receiving work that could be called the scummiest of scums, even when it will mean dirtying those hands of yours..."
(Bilky)

"Bilky-sama has also properly taught us to do surface work. Also, just as we have said, since the day we were adopted, you have provided us with clothes, food, a dwelling; all of those without uncomfortableness. Our boss and father is

Bilky-sama."

"...I see. Understood. You can take your leave." (Bilky)

"Excuse me then."

Her sister Carol didn't say a single word and simply showed the same attitude and expressions as her little sister and left.

They have been acquainted for long.

Bilky was sure that there were no lies or hesitation from them.

The uneasiness that had appeared in him at first has now disappeared.

Only a slight fear remained.

It was slight, but it was a prickle that wasn't disappearing.

"Morris, huh. The butler of Patrick Rembrandt and also the person in charge of the company's darkness. Rembrandt is a compassionate man, but there's no way he would be able to raise a company that big with only that. There must be dirty work and darkness proportional to it, and that Morris is the one who is managing this. He was originally a skilled assassin. As always, he is someone who I can't see his depths." (Bilky)

Bilky muttered the name of the one who made the request this time.

This is not the first time that he has had a connection with Morris.

Not only that. Before Bilky had entered the current work style of his, Morris had been an existence that had guided him by practice as a senior in that area.

Bilky couldn't refuse if the request was from him.

"No, it is not only me. The 'eldest', Kuuma, seemed like he had something in his mind when the name of Rembrandt was mentioned. He had a positive reception in regards to the plan about the materials from the very beginning. We are talking about him here. Before he had opened his own store, he was an employee of the Rembrandt Company after all." (Bilky)

In that case, since the moment this request had been brought by the Morris of the Rembrandt Company, there was no choice of refusing for him either.

As a result, the acceptance of the request proceeded smoothly.

"In the first place, the one who saw through the talent of Keena and Carol was Morris." (Bilky)

In the past, he was under his care, and yet, when he is in a place where the person in question is not there, he calls Morris without any honorifics.

This is an unconscious behaviour of him out of envy due to the achievements that Morris produced in his active days...and also fear. On top of that, there was disgust mixed in it as well.

'If I had to choose between one or the other, it would be Keena, but the two of them have quite the talent as assassins. If I were still in my main occupation, I would like to polish those gems', is what he whispered to Bilky, and told him about the existence of the talented pro-assassins to be.

But even with that, Bilky didn't want to be too deeply involved with Morris.

Since the time he got a high class restaurant of exclusive members in the surface world, he has been thinking of something, and lately, he has been even more sure of it.

That Morris could use those two as scapegoats, and that he could get enough money with his other job even without the need of relying in assassinations anymore.

The part about the scapegoats is true, but the reason why it weighed so heavily in Bilky was mainly because of what has been accumulating in his heart.

What funded this restaurant was the income from the behind-the-scenes work.

But if asked whether he would be able to eat with only that income...

The word 'retirement' has surfaced inside of Bilky's heart quite a lot lately.

He couldn't take it anymore.

This wasn't a world that someone could stay long in.

That's why he taught those sisters techniques that would allow them to properly live normal lives for the day they begin to think in the same way as him.

It was a sort of atonement for him.

The existence that destroys that thinking of his from the very foundations is Morris.

There's no doubt that he is exemplary as a butler, and at times, he would even take the place of his master in negotiations. He supports the Rembrandt household both in the public and private fronts.

It is said that a certain percent of the profitable investments of the Rembrandt Company are proposals of Morris.

On top of that, he also contributes in many establishments with his own funds.

He doesn't publicly announce those things, but it is not as if he is being secretive in that area like Lime was.

And also...

The ones that prove to be an hindrance to the company and his master, he would secretly crush them no matter if in legal, illegal, inhuman, or cruel ways.

He is trying to crush one at present.

This is not the first time he has made a behind-the-scenes request like this.

Morris is all those points amalgamated and that's his natural state. That fact made Bilky tremble.

The part about him knowing about those raw assassin gems was apparently something he had learned while he was donating to them.

He was supposed to be donating to save the unfortunate children, and yet, he at the same time told Bilky about the assassins he had gotten an eye on.

When he asked how he learned about them, he naturally responded with 'it was when I was called there to thank me for the donation'.

He is hard to comprehend.

Those kind of existences are most likely the kind of people that can live as perpetual monsters in the dark side of the world.

His heart had reached an understanding about it.

“Lime Latte is a fool. It would be one thing if it were just a simple big company. But you have picked a fight with an opponent that you should never pick a fight with. The Shadowless Morris still lives on even at present huh...”
(Bilky)

In the past, in the days when Morris was still active, there were rumors he had a job called shadowless, which gave him that nickname.

Bilky pitied Lime, and feared Morris.

After pouring what remained of the glass deep down his throat all at once, he left his seat.

Extra Story XL: Manga SS – Him last night

There's a book called the revelation scriptures.

It is an important document that has written down half with the Goddess' Blessing, and the other half about the way to make magic potions.

There's a lot of difficult to understand techniques and not all of them have been unraveled yet, but there's even the descent of the Goddess and the way to make elixirs written in it.

For the priests and alchemists in this world, you could even call it a book that others would kill their owners for.

Not even a single piece of that book is passed around to the public, and it is rarely being traded around in the underground society at prices you would question their sanity.

The ones that are currently known are one original and two manuscripts.

The original one that Elysion had is now in Limia Kingdom; a manuscript of it is in the number one academic town, Rotsgard; and the other one is rumoured to be in the possession of an influential family head in Aion, but the particulars are unknown. It is a manuscript that comes out to the open and is once again enveloped in darkness.

"Ambrosia, huh. One of the wonder drugs that, since the time the important flowers couldn't be found, it is said that it might be impossible to make."

A medicine that is able to show effects on a variety of diseases is called a wonder drug.

That's why, when something can be defined as a wonder drug, the price will obviously be extravagant. The more precedents it has, the higher the worth goes, to the point that there's no ceiling to it.

The young man who muttered the name of Ambrosia, Hazal, knew that the true wonder drug is the medicine of all medicines, the Elixir, but well, he doesn't plan on complaining on the many medicines out there with the title of wonder drug.

"If I remember correctly, in the revelation scriptures, only the way to use the ambrosia was written down." (Hazal)

That's right.

Even when the manufacturing methods have been deciphered from the revelation scriptures, there's a lot of wonder drugs that cannot be produced because the conditions or materials are not at disposal.

The Ambrosia can be considered one of the easiest in terms of production, which, in a sense, is pretty rare within the wonder drugs.

"I didn't think I would be hearing that name from Kuzunoha-san though. There's a lot of fake manuscripts out there, so it is slightly worrying though... Maybe it was a bad thing that I reflexively answered immediately." (Hazal)

Hazal was holding his head and letting out a dry laugh at the room of an inn that is slightly better than the usual.

He was amazed at himself for still having that researcher soul as an alchemist.

Hazal still hasn't told Toa and the others in his party about his family name.

There's a lot of adventurers that don't have a family name, but Hazal actually has one. Even so, Hazal only introduced himself as Hazal. In the adventurer registration, it was wrapped up with only registering as Hazal.

It may be a pain to do any changes to it, but in those areas, the Adventurer

Guild is lax.

He doesn't want to involve others into his own problematic circumstances, or more like, in order for others to not step into them, he only introduced himself with his first name.

"If I had said things like 'someone like me...' or 'it was just a coincidence', I most likely wouldn't be here..." (Hazal)

In the first place, only few have touched the revelation scriptures.

At the Limia Kingdom, the head of the Goddess church wouldn't allow alchemists to touch it so readily; in the academy town, Rotsgard, the researches are mostly focused in alchemy, but the only ones who can get a sniff of it are only a truly limited elites.

Hazal may be muttering in self-derision, but since he knows about the contents of it in such detail, there's no doubt that he is a capable one.

"Really... The biggest mistake in my life was that day, at that time..." (Hazal)

With distant eyes, Hazal looks back a few years back, at his own figure that was progressing in a peaceful and -at a glance-a bright future of promotions.

While feeling on his skin the characteristic wind of Tsige that's mixed with the heat created by the people's desires and the cold of the night's breeze, he sunk into his past.



The me at that time was truly doing well.

It was when I was in my mid-teens, when I was still a student.

At the Mazul Academy, that can be considered one of the most prominent of mage schools, I had the highest grades in the water element.

Even when taking every area into account, I would enter into the top three. A student with high expectations placed on him. That's me, Hazal...that was me.

Water is not only useful in both offensive and defensive fronts, it is also able to do support; an element that could be considered the honorary student type

of elements.

There's a lot of parts in terms of specialization where it is inferior to other elements, but it is an element that doesn't lack in all areas.

That's why I was unnecessarily conceited.

In the future, I would be able to use high ranked water magic, and be admired by the mages as the strongest for generations, and even the Priestess of Lorel would come ask for my opinions. That's how far my delusions went when I was thinking about how I would become that kind of water user.

And in reality, in those days, even when I was still a student, I had the class of Aqua Astral which is an incredibly rare job that there might only be one or none in a mage division of a major power.

Now that I look back at myself, I did a lot of things that would make me want to writhe in pain at how shameful I was, but in those days, thanks to my achievements and the weight of my family's reputation, those things didn't get out to the public (or so I think).

There was still time before graduation, and yet, I had already received several invitations from known countries and companies. I was living that kind of fulfilling life.

It was exactly at that time when all of those, as well as my own sense of worth, had begun to crumble -at a certain summer day...

I used my long summer break to move from the branch school of Mazul Academy to a certain main school to participate in a public lecture.

It was truly on a whim.

No matter how much praise I got, in the end, it was only from a branch school level.

'If he were a true genius, he would have long been transferred to a main school', is what I heard from a pitiful loser who lacks in power, intelligence, talent...and also facial looks compared to me.

With that, I was a bit interested in the main schools, that was all there was.

And so, I randomly decided on checking out the lecture of an alchemist that

works full-time at a main school.

Because rather than going to a lecture of a full-time employed teacher of who-knows-where that only does it for pocket money, it would be easier to tell the level if it were from a full-time teacher that I know where he comes from.

I do remember that I had chosen that lecture because I had done the production of a number of magic medicines before at that time.

It was a lecture regarding the production of the wonder drug, craquant, and the problems of their use in the current era.

The contents weren't that novel.

It was a lecture regarding it being one of the wonder drugs written in the few revelation scriptures existent in the world. It has been deciphered, but because of a variety of reasons, it hasn't been possible to reproduce the production of many of the medicines.

The skills of the teacher were good.

Even when I didn't have that much knowledge of alchemy, I was able to learn about the alchemist world. And the craquant that he had chosen as the wonder drug of interest was a perfect way to talk about the allure of reproducing the wonder drugs to obtain profit.

It is a medicine that can be made by using both the water and earth element at not that high of a level. Most of the ingredients are things that are plenty accessible, and there's only the need of a small dose of the valuable materials.

By applying it, one can protect themselves from skin diseases, and can also completely cure them.

In the world of hyumans where the importance of beauty is high, the uses expand to even the adventurers who step into unknown territories, and also the army.

It is close to being perfected, but it is not perfected. It is a dream within a dream.

...

I was a talented mage that was able to control water, and was able to utilize

earth to a decent extent -and I was also an A class conceited idiot.

After the lecture was over, a bunch of students swarmed over to the teacher in order to ask more about the progress of the research. By the time when the number of merchants and nobles, who were burning with the desire of profiting from this research, were beginning to thin out, I had gone to where that teacher was.

"It was a splendid lecture. By the way, I can use all the techniques required to produce a Craquant. Well, I am just an Aqua Astra alchemist that attends Mazul but, can I try it for a bit here?" (Hazal)

Is what I said.

Aah, I was truly a big idiot.

In order to show it in practice, there's a stage with a wide desk, there's the materials to make a craquant, and the environment settings were still being maintained by the spell.

When the teacher had shown the production process of it, around half of the materials were used, and probably as he expected, the making of it had failed.

But, at that time, I thought: 'what, it looks like I can actually do it'.

Well, that might have been an act of the teacher itself so that it would make one think that it is possible.

Inducing the thought that 'it might have been possible to go a bit further'. But well, a failure is a failure.

The teacher at first showed an expression of 'what is a mere branch school student saying', but in the end, because I said that I would be shouldering the cost of the materials, and because I had the rare class Aqua Astral, he may have had his interest piqued, and so, he gave me the permission.

He explained the process, and he showed it too.

The water element magic was a 15, the earth element was a 6; the requirement to finish it was around 30.

I...with the best of my abilities in my life until now...had managed to succeed at my first try.

In this place where the teacher, the students, and also the nobles and merchants were watching, I had reproduced the wonder drug, Craquant, to this world.

I went 'what, so it wasn't that big of a deal after all'.

I was carefreely thinking this and wasn't that interested in the mood around that was turning hectic.

I was immediately restraint by the employees of the academy, and had been brought at the front of the main school's director in that very same day.

I had been confined in a facility as a researcher of Rotsgard Academy.

Even if I called it 'confined', I was paid quite a bit and my standing was quite high as well.

The reason why I didn't have freedom was because I had succeeded in something incredible in the presence of the eyes of many, and there would be the danger of being kidnapped by a variety of organizations so that they can profit from it.

For me, the problem I had were the geniuses there.

It goes without saying that their knowledge was vast, but their magic power, magic abilities, and elements they could use were also excelling.

Within those people, I was at most within the lowest.

In almost no time at all, people aside from me were able to reproduce the craquant, and the steps of it were being improved by the geniuses one after the other.

Finally, within the group of geniuses called Purple Haze, one of their elites managed to establish a production process based on already existing potion making processes.

At that moment, everything that supported my confidence had crumbled.

In the end, I simply managed to reproduce the craquant by chance. There were no other achievements from me.

"And so, after running away because it got way too painful, I believed in a

kind and beautiful woman, and ended up getting abducted. By the time I noticed, I was a potion maker in an adventurer party. I was even betrayed by them, got sold, and was thrown into the wasteland through a hidden route, and ended up with a debt in the deepest base there.” (Hazal)

It was a laughable fall of glory story.

But I am the one who is now calling myself an alchemist instead of my true class that is Aqua Astral.

And it is true that I ran away because I didn’t want to return to that place and pass through a miserable experience, and I didn’t want to be stabbed with backbiting.

The reason why I got desperate and fought in reckless ways as if looking for a place to die was because I wanted to make a gamble where I gain a big turnabout with me as the chip.

But while I was blindly acting like this, the lives around me had...

“... Everything...is due to my own stupidity.” (Hazal)

But the life of just waiting for my death had ended.

A miracle happened in a truly sudden fashion.

I am currently in a party together with adventurers who have tasted hell just like me and have tasted the same miracle.

There’s an elf and a dwarf, but I don’t mind it at all.

Or rather, I feel more at peace than when I was in Mazul or when I was living at my homeland.

I do think it mysterious, but at the same time, it doesn’t feel bad.

“...If one day I manage to achieve something that I can be proud of, it might not be a bad idea to show myself at my home. I feel like it will be in a far future though.” (Hazal)

Now that I think about it, since the time I was kidnapped, I have never once thought of wanting to return home.

I really was a piece of shit in those days.

“I say all that, but right now, I have to return my debt to Kuzunoha-san as much as possible. I also profit from it. It is a win-win. Okay, let’s sleep!” (Hazal)

Since the moment I met that person, everything has gone well.

That’s why, I should be able to do my life over again.

I enter my bed slightly sooner so that fatigue doesn’t remain, and a soft and light nostalgic feeling of feathers enveloped me.

Drowsiness came to me in an instant and my consciousness waned.

Tomorrow...will surely...have something nice in store...

Extra Story XLI: Manga SS – Right after

The hurried state of the personnel could be seen here and there.

It is the private residence of Patrick Rembrandt.

Even the experienced maids were running around without caring about who saw them.

It wasn’t hard to imagine that sudden accidents would happen when in such state.

“...Morris.”

The ruckus of the personnel still hadn’t reached the room of the head and his family.

Without reprimanding the situation of his house, the head of that house simply muttered lowly —the name of his long time partner.

Even when they are in a position of master and butler, they are also friends.

He whispered the name of the person that, in a sense, knows more about him than his own wife.

“Yes?” (Morris)

“A miracle like this...can happen even to people like me, huh.”

Rembrandt has called himself with ‘watakushi’ for a long time, but he just now used ‘ore’ instead and increased the strength in the hand that was gripping his bandaged and wounded arm.

It was clear for anyone to see that he had some kind of conflict within him.

“...True. If that man hadn’t been at this place today and hadn’t helped us, the thing that would be filling this house wouldn’t be hope.....it would instead be filled with inexplicable despair. I would say this is plenty enough to call a miracle. But we donated quite a lot to the church, and we also spread a lot of money to charity; if we were talking about a ‘next in line for a miracle’, I think there’s no need for master to self-deride yourself by saying ‘people like me’.” (Morris)

“Haha, donations, huh. It is true that we did give them quite a lot. In the end, we didn’t do anything when they asked for our help though.” (Rembrandt)

“...The Goddess-sama is almighty after all.” (Morris)

The tone of Morris was quite cynical and was changing frequently depending on the intentions of his master.

“That’s why’ she doesn’t do anything, huh. It is true that it would be best for the world if a God doesn’t do anything. Ah, but a miracle did happen. I...didn’t have to lose them...” (Rembrandt)

“Yes, truly a blessing.” (Morris)

Looking at the eyes of Rembrandt who had raised his head, Morris noticed the state of his master and gave words of celebration with a gentle tone.

But well, for Morris, who doesn’t have a child or a family, the Rembrandt household is his family, and his friend Patrick trusts Morris more than his own daughters and wife.

The despair and anger that swirled in Morris was immeasurable when he learned that, in this time’s disaster, the skills he polished and everything he has trained for were of no use.

“Yeah. Thanks. I am truly thankful.” (Rembrandt)

“...”

Patrick looks back at the battle that he thought had no exit, and wrings out his gratitude again.

Morris didn't celebrate it twice and simply nodded lightly.

With just that, it got through and they understood each other.

The calamity that attacked the Rembrandt household has left.

A storm-like miracle had blown it all away.

That's why, what is waiting for them from now on will be the path of healing that they were about to give up on ever happening.

For them, it was very literally a bright and dazzling tomorrow.

Morris was receiving with heartfelt joy the drive of wanting to move his body and do something right this instant and decided to obey that feeling.

In this time where all the personnel was working busily, without any breaks, they were doing that with a smile.

He was also one of the people that wanted to move like that.

"Well then, master, I have a lot of things I must do. Yeah, there's a mountain of things I have to prepare. I will be taking my leave now." (Morris)

Just when Morris had turned around and was about to begin work, Patrick, who had been nodding lightly several times, suddenly spoke to the back of his friend.

"Morris, about that certain matter..." (Rembrandt)

It was a different tone from the one he had been using until now, or more like, it is the tone he usually uses.

They were words coming, not from a single man happy about the miracle brought upon his daughters and wife, but the representative of a big company.

"Yes. There's already no problems. We can move anytime and put an end to it." (Morris)

"No, that's not what I meant." (Rembrandt)

"?"

“Stop that order.” (Rembrandt)

“...What?” (Morris)

The unexpected words of his master had made Morris turn back with unusual words clad with anger.

“The assassination of Lime Latte is suspended.” (Rembrandt)

“That guy...is the man that continuously interfered with the Ruby Eye’s eye request. He is a noxious being that, not only tried to bring death to Lisa-sama, Sif-sama, and Yuno-sama, but also bring harm towards this house—” (Morris)

“This was brought by a mistake from when I was young. Lime doesn’t know everything. He is just an idiot.” (Rembrandt)

“Even if that’s the case, there’s still the need for retribution. It is not settled yet, but there seems to be a possible substitute for him. In the first place, wasn’t the elimination of Lime something that Patri—Master had ordered?” (Morris)

“Yeah, that’s why I am the one stopping it. It should be possible to retract requests in that association. Of course, I won’t ask for a reimburse of the advance payment, and I will also accept the payment for the expenses. No problem.” (Rembrandt)

“In this matter alone, I simply can’t acknowledge—” (Morris)

“I already decided on it, Morris.” (Rembrandt)

“Why?! That guy should pay with his death! Isn’t that right?!” (Morris)

“That guy...” (Rembrandt)

“?”

“Lime will...in a near future...make his move on Makoto-dono and the others.” (Rembrandt) <Oh, looks like in the manga (and maybe light novel), he is called Makoto Kuzunoha instead of Raidou Kuzunoha. Must be copyright issues. xD>

“?!”

“No doubt about it. Because he completed the request that Lime was obstructing after all. At the very least, we have been saved since we have a

relationship with Makoto-dono that holds no animosity. Then, how will he see adventurers that make contact with him with the evil intentions of eliminating them?" (Rembrandt)

"...Are you saying that you will be handing over the elimination?" (Morris)

"That's not it. I simply got curious. Right now, I am wondering what is it that will be born from them making contact with each other. Maybe an unbelievable miracle will be born. That's why, I want to watch over it for a bit longer."

(Rembrandt)

"Then, can I take it as it being postponed?" (Morris)

The danger dwelling in Morris' eyes had slightly reduced in intensity.

"...Right. I did say I would be suspending it, but I might once again put it in motion. 'Postponed' might be a more accurate word, yeah." (Rembrandt)

"Then, I will notify them that the order will be temporarily stopped." (Morris)

"Please do. When I think about it calmly, moving without caring about anything in order to kill him makes me feel as if...I really should have more productive things to do. If I think about the pain of my wife and daughters, my murderous intent can't be repressed even now, but...if my family is to be saved, I might have to reflect and rethink it..." (Rembrandt)

"Meaning?" (Morris)

"Regarding being too soft of my sides and creating openings; the lesson I have been taught about climbing all the way to where I am now with arrogance and pride that almost brought me to lose my family in the process. My fixation of Lime might create cracks in the image that I have build up until now."

(Rembrandt)

"..."

Morris felt a cold sweat flow down from his back as he listened to Patrick speaking indifferently.

They have truly been together for a long time.

But even he can't understand Rembrandt's cold way of thinking -he sometimes shows-that was as if he were weighing his own life on a scale.

No matter how emotional he gets, this man will always be hiding a cold logic side in his head.

And at times, he would stop, step forward, or change paths.

The result of those decisions are clear to the eye just by looking at the company he has build up until this day and the position he has in Tsige.

“Let’s both calm down a bit, Morris. If there’s the need to, I will obviously kill Lime and will have the orphanage gruesomely disappear. But the situation has changed. It goes without saying, the reason is Makoto-dono. He will create a company. Doesn’t that sound interesting? Just what will happen in this town?” (Rembrandt)

“Master...” (Morris)

Whether he is cold-hearted or innocent, Patrick spoke cruel words with an expression as if he were a child at the opening of a park.

“Prepare a doctor and a healer to help Lisa, Sif, and Yuno recover. Of course, the requests of the clothes store and jewelry stores are also necessary and of high priority. I would like to move that side a bit as well. Right, how about having Jio keep a watch on the wasteland materials of the ‘material stores’.” (Rembrandt)

“Jio?” (Morris)

Morris asks back with a puzzled expression after hearing an unexpected name.

It is true that he is someone that they will be meeting under another matter, but he didn’t think he would hear that name from his master again.

“You will be meeting him when issuing the order stop, so that’s a good chance to do that. Didn’t the Alchemy Meister say it not that long ago? About the levels of Makoto-dono’s acquaintances. If that’s true, the supply and demand of the wasteland materials will move. It wouldn’t hurt to investigate. Also, about the material grater...the Mirio Company! If I remember correctly, the representative’s name is Howe, or something like that. It is a nice time to have him and Jio meet each other. It will get interesting.” (Rembrandt)

“...”

“Morris?” (Rembrandt)

Seeing the butler, that would normally respond with some sort of reaction, placing his hand on his mouth and maintaining silence, Patrick checked on his state.

“...I remembered. I felt as if I had forgotten to report something. I have remembered now.” (Morris)

“What is it?” (Rembrandt)

“You said that you had a chance to witness the ability of Makoto-dono, right?” (Morris)

“Yeah, of course.” (Rembrandt)

“Actually, that Alchemy Meister, Hazal...” (Morris)

“Yeah?” (Rembrandt)

“Even though he was entrusted the completed wonder drug, he almost broke it.” (Morris)

“?!?!?!?”

Rembrandt's eyes opened wide.

That unbelievable confession had stopped his breath.

But the shock didn't stop to only that.

“Moreover, twice.” (Morris)

“?!?!?!?!?!?!?!?”

“If Makoto-dono hadn't been there...I don't know what would have happened. But well...Makoto-dono was the one who introduced us to Hazal-kun in the first place though.” (Morris)

Patrick's eyes were open to the point that you would wonder when they would come out of their sockets, his nose was opened in agitation, and there were many veins popping out heavily from here and there.

He was going from red to blue, showing off quite a high level expression.

Seeing that incredibly rare and amusing face of his master, he reduced the output a bit.

“Well then, I will be beginning the work with Jio. Master, please rest well for today at least..... Ah, about Hazal-kun, he is at the underground medicine manufacturing room.” (Morris)

It is not as if he has acknowledged everything.

But...at the very least, his steps are lighter than before.

Because they are going to recover.

Because the light will return to the Rembrandt household.

Morris walked in the corridor with a truly joyful expression that only a few close to him could tell apart.

Extra Story XLII: Manga SS – A certain man sets sail

Order stop.

Hearing that notice, Bilky let out a small sigh of relief that no one could hear in this early afternoon.

Since the time he heard about the name of the orphanage in the matter of Lime Latte, what has been inside of him has gotten even heavier than before, and a request for assassination had been settled.

“...It is time to put an end.” (Bilky)

That was the answer that came out from the relief of his heart.

He has been working for quite a long time since basing himself at Tsige.

He doesn't know how many lives he has taken.

In order to protect his psyche, he has purposely forgotten it.

He learned that he was not fit to this kind of job since the moment he learned

about the hidden face of Morris.

Even if he had the ability to kill people, he didn't have the mental fortitude to kill without any reason.

"I can't eat meat by the side of a corpse." (Bilky)

Morris probably can.

"I must talk to Keema and Carol about this as well. Well, it wouldn't be a bad idea to turn into an actual restaurant." (Bilky)

Being the eatery old man is a kind of humility from him.

The store of Bilky is one of the few high-class stores in Tsige, and its name is known around the important people of the town.

There's no few instances where it is used for business entertainment, and there's plenty income.

He has also build up enough reputation to be called a celebrity.

In other words, there's no financial difficulty in retiring.

"...It will be stinking of blood for a while." (Bilky)

Because he is not in a world where a single paper of retirement will work, after all.

It can't be helped.

Bilky stood up and left to the town in a normal demeanor that wouldn't make one think that his life is in danger at all.

He was prepared to be tailed and have assassins on him.

Who knows how many people he himself has killed because they wanted to retire. Just looking back at it made it feel endless to the point of laughing.

If you overcome it, you win; if you lose, you die.

He understands that's how it works.

He showed a bright smile as he walks in the townscape of Tsige that is different from other settlements.

It is not on the level of bases inside the wasteland, but there's a lawless,

energetic, and violent kind of air in Tsige.

There may be order, but it is not something absolute.

It is not as if it is a town where violence can be found here and there though.

It is one of the lands affiliated to the Aion Kingdom, and yet, the merchants hold more power than the feudal lords, and the residents are comprised mostly of adventurers.

It is also the only town in the world that has a method to reliably obtain wasteland materials.

In these several decades, there hasn't been any big changes in this town.

Aside from the Rembrandt Company growing exponentially.

Tsige simply had order to a certain extent.

The town is finally falling under the command of an influential power after a long time and reaching calm, is what Bilky thinks.

Rembrandt had given a certain level of order to both the back and front sides of the town, so it couldn't be helped that Bilky would feel some respect towards him.

As a resident of the same town, he knows well that this is not something easy to achieve.

"Now then, in that case, the front face of the store—no, the store...I should try extending my hand for the sake of it." (Bilky)

When the behind-the-scenes work is gone, his time in hand increases to an incredible extent.

But he can't just take that time leisurely, and so, he tried to direct it at other work.

Bilky is a work person.

"A food cart...nah. The restaurant is open at meal times to begin with. I extended my hand to an eatery business, but it unexpectedly lacks novelty. I do have a good amount of branch stores though..... In the end, that's the only choice, huh." (Bilky)

While walking through the street, he pondered to see if he could find any ideas.

But since he runs a restaurant, he couldn't find anything appealing enough to say 'this is it!'.

The best way to stably expand a business is to make branch stores.

But he thought something like that wouldn't be interesting.

"...A store that has a menu mainly focused in meat food. Places that act like meat stores have been standing out lately. Even if that other place has a long history, this shouldn't be a time where you can just sit cross-legged. Just what is the owner thinking?" (Bilky)

Stores that narrow down their ingredients and provide specialized food are increasing in Tsige.

There's also a variety of cuisines from different countries, but with just that, the town is in a state of oversaturation.

And on top of that, stores that use meat, fish, or vegetables as their pillars are beginning to appear.

Fortunately, there's already an old established store in Tsige that mainly focuses on meat.

There's already a model, so it is easy to copy.

Bilky speculates that, in a near future, this old store will be cornered by the meat stores in the vicinity and get crushed.

After pondering for a few seconds, he entered the store that provides meat food.

"Welcome!"

"For one." (Bilky)

"Understood. Over here then!"

After instantly skimming the menu with his eyes once, he soon finishes ordering.

(How boring. Is something like this popular with the adventurers and young

merchants of this era?) (Bilky)

The food that he serves in his store is cuisine of the Limia Kingdom.

Right now, he has sent two cooks to the kingdom for training.

He is properly getting the cooking techniques from the actual place and serving them in Tsige.

On top of that, he doesn't simply bring them there. He also matches the taste and ingredients to the liking of the people in Tsige.

He brags about that being the reason he is prospering, and he has no intentions of changing that style of his in the near future.

But this store is different.

This is just an inferior copy of meat stores.

He almost let out a sigh from the simple sight of the menu, but when he waited for around 10 minutes and he saw the food that had been served, disappointment clearly showed in his eyes.

The ingredients and the skills of the cook are all of inferior quality.

The only saving is that the price is proportional to that.

(Cheap, fast, and tastes bad. As long as you put meat in the stomach, it is fine. This is a store for those kind of people. What a big miss I drew.) (Buiky)

He didn't feel like ordering drinks at all.

After finishing about half of it, he called for the waiter, and was going to pay and leave quite a big tip, and then leave, but at that moment...

[Excuse me, I would like to order.]

“?!”

There was a strange-looking customer that ordered by writing with shining characters.

He has a mask that covers the upper half of his face.

He was clearly suspicious.

“...”

“...Hello?” (Bilky)

“Ah, yes. I will bring the bill—”

“No, I can go after. Please take his order first.” (Bilky)

Urging the flabbergasted waiter on, Bilky begins to check the masked customer.

(An assassin?...Doesn’t seem to be. I haven’t announced retirement yet after all.) (Bilky)

[Can you read?]

He writes by using magic to control light.

It was quite the irregular way of communicating.

There’s no doubt that he can’t speak.

It may also be an appeal that he is good with magic. Maybe there’s even an impediment with his hand as well.

Whichever it is, it is skillful, strange, and...suspicious.

The customer is a man, and he is alone.

The man orders a thick steak as recommended by the store.

Bilky laughs.

Because the same thing is right in front of him after all.

This third-rate good that is as if they were saying ‘we have cooked a leather shoe sole’.

It is a dish that he would like to even praise himself for finishing half of it.

“Uhm, sorry for the wait. I will bring the bill now—”

“No need. I felt like staying here for a bit more. Bring me a non-alcoholic drink.” (Bilky)

Luckily, the rush hour has already passed.

The waiter had no complaints to the tip he received and stepped back with a pleased smile.

The masked man spread the documents he had in his hand while waiting for his order.

Bilky couldn't see the contents of it from where he is sitting, but he didn't look like an adventurer.

At first, Bilky had guessed that he was an adventurer from that appearance of his, and it felt as if he had been refuted.

Even so, his attire was too liberal to be a soldier.

He might be a mage...but the aura that's around him felt like that of a thief as well.

In that case, he might be the type that has two jobs of being an adventurer but also a mage.

Is how the deduction of Bilky continued.

"Waka, it seems I have made you wait."

[Tomoe, huh. No, you didn't make me wait. For now, I think the application documents will go like this. Just in case, please check them out.]

"Well then, let's see. Fumu...there doesn't seem to be any problems."
(Tomoe)

[That was fast.]

"In our case, there's not much annexed documents after all. It is mostly the name, the personnel that composes the place, and the report of the funds. There's not much to check." (Tomoe)

Company had come.

A cold sweat flows from Bilky.

Because he didn't feel her presence at all.

That's right. That blue haired woman with conspicuous attire, Bilky didn't feel her presence at all until she had taken a seat.

In other words, if that woman called Tomoe felt like it...she could take the life of Bilky with a single stroke of that sword she had hanging on her waist.

For an instant, Bilky felt regret at deciding to stay here.

(There's no way that sword is for decoration. Something outrageous has appeared.) (Bilky)

[I see. True. We don't have a guardian, don't have records of past duty, and don't have debts either. Everything filled up easily with that huh.]

"Right. About the other things that we might need, the preparations are proceeding in order." (Tomoe)

[Thanks, that's a huge help.]

"But Waka with a company huh. It feels like it will be interesting." (Tomoe)
Company?

Bilky doubted his own ears.

He obviously knows about companies.

It is that thing about merchants.

The one where you enter the guild and make.

From these two, the man called as Waka must be the higher one.

Is he really a merchant?

The inside of Bilky's head was filled with question marks.

(No no no no no no! A guy that has a mask and can't speak is the boss, and the swordsman that brings a cold sweat down my spine like an assassin is an employee?! What kind of joke is that?!) (Bilky)

But the talk continues on without a care for his feelings.

These two seem to be seriously planning on making a company and doing business.

The conversation continued on, and Bilky learned that the man doesn't have a single bit of experience in running a business, that he has enough money to actually pay upfront the cost of making a store, and that he had passed the guild test not that long ago.

Bilky held his head in pain.

A mass of unreasonableness was right at his vicinity.

He was clearly different in type from all the merchants he knows. Just how can a laughable and ridiculous self-proclaimed merchant actually exist?

There was an undecipherable one right there.

[Well, after finishing the request this time around, we managed to get acquainted with an amazing merchant like Rembrandt-san. It might unexpectedly go well.]

‘No way it would go well, you flower garden brain’, is what Bilky wanted to retort with, but he heard a name he couldn’t ignore.

—Rembrandt-san.

‘Haaaah...’

He made a long sigh.

Rembrandt here as well.

Bilky wanted to try getting involved for a bit with this stupid merchant, but he immediately threw away that thought.

(Well, let’s at least get information. I don’t want to step in a lion’s den without knowing.) (Bilky)

The man that decided on leaving the assassination business was thinking of gathering information on these two.

But after hearing the name of Rembrandt, that drive of his lowered, and soon after, he regained drive.

Waka and Tomoe.

After hearing the talk of these strange two about something that sounds to be the culture of a foreign country, he felt that staying was the correct decision and felt like pumping his fists in celebration.

It was a talk about eateries.

The masked man called Waka spoke about a system called delivery service.

It was when the woman Tomoe had talked about how it was so inconvenient

to be unable to take out food in places other than food carts.

“We don’t see delivery services frequently here.” (Bilky)

A service where after getting the order, you stuff the food in a box and send it to the customer.

It is true that such service cannot be seen in Tsige.

With food carts, it is also normal to go there yourself and bring it back.

But...

Bilky falls into thought.

There’s a lot of Limia dishes that don’t need to be freshly made to taste good.

Relishes, staple food, desserts; and by bringing a sense of high-class from the box that it will be stuffed in, it might serve as a way of entertaining the customer.

It would be a good idea to try it out on customers he is well acquainted with first.

No, before that, there’s the need for a prototype.

The dishes and the box; also the way of transport and the personnel.

Regarding the box, Bilky had an idea.

He has trained a girl called Carol.

He has trained her as an assassin, but he has also trained her in one other thing.

He had asked a wood craftsman to teach her.

If things go well, it might bring big money.

(This...feels like it might become something.) (Bilky)

Bilky stood up in a good mood.

He left money in his seat, and left the store while silently giving his thanks to the two mysterious people that were still talking.

“Nice. It is beginning to get fun! I haven’t lived out my life yet!” (Bilky)

He could see a new path to live in with him and the people he is together with.

There will still be dangers.

They might trip at some sudden happenings.

But in this town that is filled with energy, living a blood-reeked life and dying would be boring.

Even that incredibly young man, he has circumstances that make him don a mask and be unable to speak, and yet, he probably has moved to a lot of countries and has learned about a lot of things, and thought about doing business with that knowledge of his.

It was such a dazzling view that made him want to wash himself away from the behind-the-scenes business and work with a smile.

The current Bilky was sure that, compared to that Waka man, he still has a lot he can still do.

In his face, there's a wide smile and fighting spirit.

The names of the Wades orphanage and Lime Latte had completely disappeared from the head of Bilky.

It was only a few months later when a high-class restaurant in Tsige had begun to gain fame as a well-known store after it began to do delivery services.

Extra Story XLIII: Manga SS – Wicked Tsige, Capture – Episode 0

[Everything is made by hand? You are doing a pretty delicate work there.]

“...”

[Sorry, because of circumstances, I can't speak.]

“...I see. My condolences. Also, thanks for praising my work.”

[If it is wood-based, you can make anything?]

“By no means! I am still far from that level. Right... I can handle things of around this level.”

Carol responded in a reasonably honest manner to the strange-looking man that had suddenly spoken to her.

Actually, she knows about him, but doesn't want him to know.

That thought of hers created a bit of awkwardness at the beginning, but the man probably thought it was the usual response to his written communication, he didn't mind it.

She was relieved that the man wasn't showing any sort of suspicion as she used both hands to denote a size.

[Tableware and miscellaneous goods, then?]

“Wooden tableware is mostly just for collection's sake. It would be easier and more durable to use magic on metal after all.” (Carol)

[Is that so. Is earth not used much?]

“E-Earth? Using earth for tableware? Just from where did you come from?” (Carol)

[I see. Please forget about it. In other words, you are a craftsman that is becoming specialized in carpentry huh.]

“It is not that big of a thing. It may be carpentry, but I have only worked with

the wood that comes from the wasteland. I haven't touched other wood aside from that. What? Even if you flatter me to death, I won't be making it cheaper, okay? ...Only a little bit cheaper." (Carol)

The man, Makoto, took in his hands a container that resembled the one for Japanese alcoholic drinks and stroked the surface, looking at the wood grain.

While at it, he took another vase, and compared it to other ones, and while nodding a number of times, he let out sighs.

If Carol understood Japanese, she would have been able to tell that he had been saying 'amazing' frequently.

But well, the words Makoto said every now and then were of an unknown meaning for Carol, so the only impression she could get from him was that he is truly a pitiful man that can't speak common language.

Even so, maybe because Carol could read the meaning of those short words and the attitude he had, it created happiness inside of her.

She had no intentions of cutting the price, but if he were to ask for it, she was willing to reduce the price a bit.

[I think they are nice articles made in an incredibly thorough manner. This looks like a street stall but, is the place you open in always the same?]

"T-Thanks. Yeah. There are times when I move slightly, but when I sell goods, it is normally around here, or sometimes somewhere close to here." (Carol)

[I will be buying all the wood-based containers. How much will it be?]

Right after the joyful evaluation of Makoto towards Carol, he once again speaks out joyful words.

"U-Uhm...Wait for a bit." (Carol)

[Okay.]

It may be a slightly distorted parent and child relationship, but aside from the transactions in Bilky's company, it is rare to see a trade of this level.

If it were to be calculated, it would be a little bit over 1 gold, but Carol thought it would be better to wrap this up within the price of silvers.

“Thanks for waiting. In silvers, it would be...” (Carol)

[By the way, this is all made by hand, right?]

“Of course.” (Carol)

Makoto nods.

She learned from a person that was basically the acquaintance of an acquaintance in that dark world, but now, Carol was interacting with Makoto as a craftsman.

[I am still a newbie, but I am a merchant. I will be paying this with the intention of wanting a connection with you as a wood craftsman from here on. No need for change.]

“Eh?”

[Well then, I will be taking this. Ah, what is your name? My name is Makoto.]

“Ah, my name is Carol.” (Carol)

Makoto throws in the wooden containers into a bag one after the other.

Maybe that bag is a magic item, even when he had thrown in everything, the bag was not swelling.

The amount she was given was 2 gold.

“Eh, Makoto-san?! This is too much!” (Carol)

[I didn’t feel it was. I will be coming again.]

“Ah...” (Carol)

Carol follows the man with her gaze and he disappears from her sight after entering a bookshop across the street.

She thought that it is a bit nice to be able to have a conversation without the need to face the person.

“Or more like, he is the person that accepted that request of the Rembrandt Company, right? What business does he have at the place of the ‘Elder’? No, maybe he is just looking for books? No no. No no no no~.” (Carol)

Carol tilted her head for a while, but in time, she seemed to have reached an

understanding, and puts away the gold with care.

Makoto is in the bookstore.

A store where it is prohibited to read idly in.

Well, there's no bookstore in this world that allows reading in the store though.

[Excuse me. There's something I would like to ask about a book that's here.]

The biggest bookstore in Tsige has a behind-the-scenes face.

Of course, Makoto doesn't know about that as he becomes a regular at that place from here on.



“Hmm, then, that Makoto adventurer had all the eyes required huh. Serves you good, Lime.”

“Right. Even so, Keema, I am on a standing equal to that of your boss, BILKY, you know? I'm a lot higher in terms of connections and overall ability, you know?”

“Boss has retired after all. That's why, from now on...I can't shoulder the same name, so I am working with the name ‘waitress’.” (Waitress)

“‘Waitress’, you say. Anyways, BILKY retiring huh. He got me good there.”

The middle-aged man looks around the place, and then, looks back at the young woman and sighs.

“Is something the matter?” (Waitress)

“It is about you, Keema. I did think you were a clever one, but it is a surprise that you could stand well even from the very beginning. And so, you want to request me to be the stopgap of Morris-san?”

“...Yeah. Father—Boss is someone who has a soft side even if he looks like that after all. It seems like he is already at his limit. On that point, I am young and lively, and am also capable as an adventurer; at the restaurant's hall, I am a perfect waitress! How ya see this level of almighty!” (Keema)

“...I will help out in laying the groundwork. But until I see how KUUMA and

Jona will act, I won't be taking responsibility. Well, do your best."

"Eh? I thought Jio would be complaining a bit more though?" (Keema)

"You guys are truly...lucky. Actually, my work at the company has gotten crazy busy. My time in that front of my job will be prioritized for a while. In the first place, I don't really mind being the footing for someone who constantly gets reminded about the meaning of betrayal." (Jio)

"Work, huh." (Keema)

"Keema, wouldn't it be better for you to work as an adventurer? Isn't this a good chance? Since your father will also be quitting." (Jio)

"...I will think about it. Well then, I am counting on you for the groundwork with Shadowless-san! Leave a message saying that we will always be on the side of Rembrandt Company!!" (Keema)

"Yeah, just go. When she is working as a waitress, she is beautiful and has no wasteful movements; she is close to being the ideal woman. I don't know if to consider this a fortune or a misfortune, but I saw her real face at an early stage. Wonder what would have happened if I hadn't. Now then! Work! It is time to work! I have a mountain of work that Rembrandt-san has thrown to me!" (Jio)

The waitress attired Keema moved in an energetic manner unlike that of a waitress as she left from the backdoor of the store.

The only remaining one was Jio.

Only a middle-aged merchant that deals with wasteland materials and has a deep connection with the Rembrandt Company was left.

"So you are going to overlook both that girl and Bilky? Hmm~ Keema, huh. She looks like a girl that might be able to do a good job in my place as well."

"Jona... If you say anything strange, I will kill you." (Jio)

"That's quite the treatment. That's why everyone aside from Patrick-sama are trash." (Jona)

"...That's rich coming from a narcissistic person like you." (Jio)

"...Do you think a lolicon like you acting cool will make you look good?" (Jona)

“....”

“...”

Jio and Jona were showing a light smile while both of them were at the dim back area of the store.

“...Aah? Do you want to be minced?” (Jio)

“...Should I serve you a full course of poison? Huuh?” (Jona)

A bloodlust that would pale the faces of even trained adventurers was filling the space where only those two were.

A glaring contest of about several minutes had taken place.

If a third person had been there, that person would have definitely said with certainty that it wasn't such a short time. It was that kind of suffocating period.

“I got a rare chance of seeing that goofy lovestruck face of yours, so... I actually came for another matter. Let's stop.” (Jona)

“Yeah, got it. It would help out a lot if you are to agree with the matter of Keema as well though.” (Jio)

“About that...yeah, I am fine with it. That's the other matter I was speaking of. Jokes really don't get through with you.” (Jona)

“Meaning that...they came to your place as well?” (Jio)

“No way. Those sisters don't even get close to me at all. It is a bit related to the matter with Lime Latte. It also involves the Rembrandt Company.” (Jona)

“?!”

“The order stop that you received from Morris. There's actually a bit of a continuation to it.” (Jona)

“And why are you telling me that?” (Jio)

“Are you busy with work?” (Jona)

With a seductive smile, Jona tells Jio that she knows about the work inside Jio's company.

The woman in front of him held information that even his information

network didn't have.

It won't be information that would make him feel good, is what Jio thought as he made a face as if biting on a bitter bug.

"...Where is it you are trying to go with this?" (Jio)

"This is not a request. This is purely a suggestion out of good will. For a while, hold back on the type of work that would make you have a guilty conscience. And also, prepare yourself." (Jona)

"Those are words coming from the Rembrandt Company -from Patrick-sama, right?" (Jio)

"Yeah. One last thing... The Kuzunoha Company and the ones related to it will apparently be under the protection of the Rembrandt Company." (Jona)

"...! I personally am indebted to the Rembrandt Company. Of course, I will accept." (Jio)

"Well then, I have told you. I will be concentrating on front work for a while. I will only be attending the regular meetings. Then, if you would like to, show yourself at my store. I will prepare girls that will fit your taste, Jio-sama." (Jona)

"Thanks for relaying the message. I won't ever go even if the sky falls, but I will make sure to recommend that place to people that piss me off." (Jio)

Jio turned away his face from Jona out of displeasure, and by the time he turned back, she wasn't there anymore.

Holding a completely different feeling than in the time when Keema left, Jio felt as if he had lost in some way.

Once he looked up, he saw a blue sky stretching thinly.

If he were to go to a big avenue, he would be able to see that same sky stretching vastly far and wide, and yet, the sky he sees right now feels quite different.

It made him feel constraint like a prison.

For Jio, the merchant world was exactly that before meeting Rembrandt. And now, a company receiving the protection of Patrick Rembrandt has

appeared.

“I was surprised by the luck of Lime Latte, but that company is also quite the thing. Welcome to Tsige, Kuzunoha Company.” (Jio)

Jio was thinking of becoming a strength for that new company.

So that he can return the debt that he had received from his past benefactor.

He will be learning in the future that this decision of his will serve as preparation for the big storm that will be attacking Tsige from now on.

Kuuma, Bilky, Jona, Jio, and also Keema and Carol; every one of them were slowly being involved with him and the company that he made —from the front and the back scene.

Tomoe, Mio, Lime, Toa’s party...

Tsige was also moving from outside the peripheric of Makoto.

Extra Story XLIV – Manga SS – And then, a revolution

The remote town of Tsige was covered in energy today as well.

The people that live their lives in this town will probably think in this way: ‘the truly small changes that are made every day, no matter what kind of big wave they created, it will always be buried in the livelihood of people’.

Then, when is it that it can be noticed?

For now, only a few handful of quick-witted ones have been able to feel it.

And luckily, at the time when a number of the centric people of that big swirl were beginning to move, the heat that covered Tsige had changed in type.

“The completion rate of Toa-san’s party has become quite incredible.”

“Yeah, truly aces that have come from the wasteland. They do a great job that surpasses their reputation.”

“They are taking all the requests that are piled up after all. At first, I thought they were a daredevil bunch that had no plans at all. It looks like their actions were due to them actually having the strength to match. I am truly thankful for that.”

“They are seriously angels. When I finish work, I always make sure to drink while giving my thanks to them.”

“The high difficulty requests that require to travel far...well, those ones have their own amazing people.”

The conversation of the Adventurer Guild’s staff was cheerful.

The highly difficult gathering request of the Rembrandt Company that was a seed of worry had been resolved in a shocking manner, and the party that returned from the wasteland has finished around 30% of the wasteland requests.

A party composed of hyumans, elf, dwarf; and the leader of the party is Toa.

They poured high quality materials into the market right when they returned, on top of that, accepted a massive amount of wasteland requests that had been accumulated, moreover, their success rate is abnormally high.

For the guild staff, seeing the amount of unfinished requests in the request box decreasing had become cathartic.

The figure of Toa and her party finishing the requests at an even faster pace than before reflects reliability in their eyes, and they are thankful for it.

A part of the adventurers were beginning to feel jealousy from this, but the party is finishing the requests with their own ability.

They are not doing lowly moves like taking away requests or cheating their way.

Or rather, they are taking work, that no one took because it is way too dangerous or it doesn’t match the reward, as if it were an afterthought and were completing them.

If they work, they will get money proportional to their ability.

This is common knowledge for the adventurers.

Actually, because there's the factor of danger involved in it, adventurers would instead become picky in what they work on.

That's why it is actually a natural course of events that Toa's party would get enough money to fill up a bathtub with gold. In the personal opinion of the guild staff, they felt like shouting to them that if they had the time to envy Toa's party, they should polish their own abilities, and gain it themselves.

Sooner or later, Toa's party will change from a target of envy to a target of respect, and the Adventurer Guild is working so that it does turn out that way.

Introducing them to requests, preparation of equipment, and a variety of other measures are things that were decided on and the higher-ups didn't oppose this.

Right now Toa's party is the best model they would like others to learn from.

“...They are already on the level of the Goddess or the manifestation of a Spirit.”

“Tomoe-sama and Mio-sama, huh. Requests that, no matter how you think about it would take more than seven days, they finish in half a day.”

“It hurts that they work at random periods as they feel to, but their achievements are crazy.”

“Things like gem ores that you would only find information of in old books around Zetsuya, and materials of scarce demonic beasts, they can manage to get those in only two to three days.”

“It feels as if actual people from sagas have come out to the present.”

The other remaining unfinished requests have been dealt with by the two of the three newly registered adventurers, Tomoe and Mio.

Just like Toa, they truly came out of nowhere, registered in the guild, and the two don't come often to the guild or search for requests with enthusiasm.

Lately, they have come occasionally and say 'show me your requests', and after skimming the uncompleted requests, they would choose the ones that catch their eye.

And then, the guild would turn it into a special rank request, and at shortest,

it would take half a day, at longest, it would take only a few days to complete.

They are requests that even making party alliances to challenge them didn't work, or quests where powerful named demonic beasts -that one would take several months just to make preparations to challenge-would appear. And yet, they finished those as if nothing.

Just the fact that they are wasteland requests is enough to classify them on the high difficulty quests that would require adventurers surpassing level 100.

But the wasteland requests that these two were doing were all quests that even adventurers by profession would call as high difficulty.

Truly the high difficulty of high difficulties -super high difficulty; lunatic mode, demonic, ultimate difficulty.

They may sound like hard to swallow words, but everyone would nod at the credibility. The worst of the worse quests, that have brought about the death of many and yet are still uncompleted, are being finished by two women as if it were boring. Such unreasonable existences shocked both the adventurers and Adventurer Guild.

If Toa's party are a target of envy that they should set as goals, Tomoe and Mio are legendary existences that will create history.

There's no way they would feel envy. They all simply feared the great exploits that were being piled up by them, and were in awe.

There was a difference in the quality of the requests they complete.

The ones that Toa's party complete were ones that they themselves would be able to accomplish if they were to try hard; the ones that Tomoe and Mio complete are ones that, even if they were to take their whole lives, if they were to manage to finish even one of them, they would be sung as formidable adventurers.

Right now in Tsige, there's these two different categories of adventurers, and they were working respectively.

Even when a strange situation where the leader Lime Latte had left the frontlines, the figure of those two groups had moved the adventurers and their

activity increased greatly.

“And so, what happened with the matter of asking Tomoe-sama and Mio-sama to instruct the adventurers that head to the wasteland?”

One staff member suddenly looked at a young female staff member and said this.

This is the wish of the adventurers.

It is also a request the guild staff agree with.

But those two are targets of fear and respect, they are existences above the clouds.

The problem of who will be the one proposing this to them comes out.

“About that matter...”

A certain young female staff member was the one to stand.

She still doesn't have much experience and is one of the receptionists.

The result of a war of words, where the staff members pushed the responsibility around, was that this girl who had been absent that day would be taking the role of asking Tomoe and Mio.

She does have a connection with them in a sense.

She was the close acquaintance of one of the Rembrandt daughters.

Due to the daughters falling ill, it obviously made their interactions weaken, but even with that, she has been visiting her in her sickbed a few times.

In reality, in order to gain a stable job like being a staff member of the Adventurer Guild, her father had asked Patrick Rembrandt to be his middleman, which is far from being called friendship, and this also brought about the regular visits she had to do.

Then, what kind of connection does she actually have?

Recently, the request that the Rembrandt Company had made through the Adventurer Guild in order to treat the disease of his wife and daughters had been completed.

The one who finished that request was a newbie adventurer called Makoto; the other person that registered at the same time as Tomoe and Mio.

He is currently also registered in the Merchant Guild, and is the one who established the company called the Kuzunoha Company. This one is also a strange individual.

On top of that, Tomoe and Mio are for some reason affiliated to that Kuzunoha Company.

In other words, those three know each other.

Aside from the aforementioned request, Makoto hasn't achieved much in the Adventurer Guild, but even with that, he passed the difficult test of the Merchant Guild in a short amount of time and became a merchant which makes it clear that he has a part that surpasses the regular hyuman.

But compared to Tomoe and Mio, it is basically nothing. It is on the level that can at least be told as a conversation topic.

And so, in the conversation of the guild staff that was basically pushing responsibility, the girl receptionist that seems to be in good terms with Makoto who is connected with Tomoe and Mio, and also has a friendship status with a family member of the Rembrandt Company, and hadn't been on that very day of the conversation, had been forced the short end of the stick.

“...”

“I asked Makoto-san, and he said ‘I will try asking them’.”

After hearing what had happened, she wasn't able to eat for two days straight due to how unreasonable it was, but one day, while she was walking down the street, she coincidentally encountered Makoto alone, and as if being pushed, she charged on and spoke to him about it.

Makoto stopped his feet and pondered for a bit, and after telling her a positive response, he left towards a street stall.

She had lowered her head vigorously and shouted ‘thank you very much!’, and just like that, she lost strength in her legs and fell on her butt.

And then, a young man that acted as if he were helping her out of good will

had pickpocketed her wallet, but she was so relieved that she didn't care much about it.

"W-Was it a 'I will try asking them' that felt as if it would work?!"

"I think. He said that he would be giving me a proper reply a few days later, but I think it will work."

"You know, an 'I think' just isn't enough—!"

"News, news!! Just now, Makoto-san came to the reception and said that he will be accepting the matter of instructing the adventurers under conditions!!"

""UOOOOOOO!!!""

A receptionist had come running and delivered the good news in one breath.

This means that more capable adventurers will be raised in Tsige from now on; this means that the mysteries of the World's Border will be undercover even more in Tsige.

(I will never play hookey anymore...)

As one girl reflected on her work attitude, the staff members of the Adventurer Guild were personally feeling the big wave that appeared in the town.



(This place is like a battlefield as always.)

The material market.

The swirling heat and chaos; for Jio, it resembled that of war which he has experienced in the past, moreover, it resembled the chaos of a melee skirmish.

He himself, in certain industries, is called the 'material store'.

He shows himself at times in the front side of the material market, but even when he knows that this is not a battlefield where people take each other's lives, Jio was feeling somewhat uncomfortable.

Maybe because this is the frontstage where the sun hits.

He felt a bitter smile coming out from him for feeling the usual darkness as

more comfortable.

He doesn't have plans of replenishing his stock in the auction of today.

His objective is to survey.

Just the other day, his big benefactor Patrick Rembrandt and his butler Morris had introduced him to one merchant.

Currently, the existence that is rock steady in the front side of the world which is said to be able to pass its name in history as a major company is the Mirio Company, and its representative, Hau.

He became a merchant with quite the proper path, became independent, created a company that is specialized in material transportation, and did healthy business; a diligent man.

Let's rephrase it; he was the perfect sucker.

At the time when he had gotten pretty fat in the pockets, a big company was planning on taking in his company through dirty means, but at that time, he received the Rembrandt Company's assistance and was saved.

There's a difference in front and back sides in business, but Jio considers that Hau's circumstances are similar to his own.

And in reality, when Morris introduced that man to him, how to say it, it was as if he could understand the thoughts and ideologies of Hau to a frightening extent.

He felt as if he had met a long lost friend of his, and their conversation bloomed.

At present, the two of them trade in this town with a wide view, accurate movements, and a properly formed net.

But Jio is currently watching the auction while leaning his back against the wall, while Hau is managing the auction right in the middle of the heat.

(Good grief. To think there was something like that in the same town as I. To be able to act in such a comfortable manner at a place where the sun is hitting...) (Jio)

This is something that Jio has felt before, but for him, the air in this place was uncomfortable for him in a variety of meanings.

(Ah, I see. It might be similar to the relationship of Keema and Carol. Keema would be me and Carol would be Hau... We are incredibly similar, but we are fatally different somewhere. Light and darkness, front and back; that kind of thing?) (Jio)

He can tell the ability of Hau is plenty just by looking at him.

Even when he compared the documents Morris had given him, he came to the conclusion that he is the kind of man he would like to be friends with for a long time.

More so because they match wavelengths.

Even if Hau's side is pure white, and Jio's side is pitch black, he wanted to find a distance that would allow them to do well together.

"That and that...and also that one interests me a bit... I see." (Jio)

After a single sigh, he directs a sharp gaze at the auction.

The materials are being placed prices at a dizzying pace and bids are going all around.

In this place where you can bid solely on things that come from the wasteland, the prices are shockingly high.

He could see that a number of factions are controlling the price to a certain extent, and are doing their best to obtain the highest of profits from the supply and demand.

Hau is not within that group of people.

He is moving on his own volition.

And there's also other merchants that are not being drowned in the movements of the factions.

Most of them are merchants that have obtained information from the Rembrandt Company, but two of the merchants that are not in that list are doing interesting moves.

Jio watched the movements of the market, kept the merchants worth of attention in his memories, and then, after being impressed by the conduct of Hau, he left the auction in the middle of it.

“Oh, Morris-san.” (Jio)

“Jio. Anything worth in the wasteland materials?” (Morris)

“Yeah. But most of all, Hau was incredible.” (Jio)

“What must be watched are the people, huh. As I thought, you are good. And so...did it go well?” (Morris)

“...To a scary extent. The influx in the wasteland had settled down, and the prices had been in a state of lull, but now... Even that unknown company, the Kuzunoha Company, could be manipulated by someone as great as the Rembrandt Company huh.” (Jio)

“...I would like it if you were to keep what I say here a secret. Makoto-sama is Master’s benefactor and his friend. It was purely a request from our side.” (Morris)

“In that case, Makoto-dono managed to make friends with the most dependable person of this town right from the beginning, huh. He has incredible luck.” (Jio)

“It would be wrong to say that Makoto-sama and Master are on the same level. And you would laugh if I said that it was actually us who were the lucky ones.” (Morris)

“So my evaluation was wrong? No, someone of my level will never be able to read the thoughts of Patrick-sama. Well then, I will be taking my leave now. This place is a bit too bright for me after all.” (Jio)

“Master said that you two will now be the ones who will take charge of the material movement in Tsige. It is not something to hide in the darkness for. Comfiness is something that can be changed by your way of living.” (Morris)

“...I will do my best to answer your expectations. I will be taking my leave now.” (Jio)

“Okay. See you later then.” (Morris)

Morris entered the market and Jio left it.

Morris then turned his head back and watched the back of Jio, showing an expression of nostalgia.

(Jio, huh. He has plenty enough qualities to make him a good merchant. Of course, in the front side. There's no need to worry, everyone is like that at first. When you are in a place for too long and go outside, there will always be opposition to it.) (Morris)

Morris could read the sentiment of Jio.

Because he resembled his past self a bit after all.

But well, compared to the criminal organization Morris was affiliated to in the past, what Jio does is on the level of a prank done by a child.

It is a level of darkness where there are occasional times when the things Jio deals with are hyumans or demi-humans.

(It is exactly because he is doing things half-heartedly that it creates doubts when moving to one side. Hahaha, well, no matter how much he tries to struggle, we will have him move as we want though. At the back side, there's a good one within the girls that I had Bilk raise after all.) (Morris)

Morris felt slight pity towards Jio who was already being swallowed by the plan of Patrick.

How would he react if he knew that there's already a successor for him, a successor that can control the assassination stores in Tsige.

(Keema, was it? Since the moment I saw her, she already had nice eyes. And she has managed to become pretty well acquainted to that work under the care of that man. Natural disposition, the taste of dark happiness; after laying the groundwork, I will look forward to the day we meet.) (Morris)

Without letting out a single bit of his thoughts leak to the outside, Morris went around a number of markets and exchanged greetings with a number of companies.

Without letting anyone sniff out that someone who will bring about big changes in the town has appeared.

Rembrandt predicts that, after a few months, the town will show abnormal signs of economic growth, and a big storm that common sense won't work on will come.

Even Morris who has been working for a long time as a butler had a hard time believing that, but this is supposed to be a storm with Kuzunoha Company at its center.

"A revolution, huh. Fufufu, if I can still see something as interesting as that when I am this old, living for a long time isn't that bad of a thing, huh." (Morris)

After a good while of Makoto arriving to Tsige, Tsige will be wrapped in a big change that could even be called a revolution.

The prediction of Patrick Rembrandt would hit the mark, but the scale of it will surpass his expectations by far more than he thought.

Within that big storm that even the Rembrandt Company can't control completely, the Kuzunoha Company swam around comfortably.

As chaos and development mixes, it sublates, and Tsige approaches unknown growth.

A maelstrom that doesn't wait for you to be ready enough and doesn't listen to anyone; it just silently, and precisely, approached its moment.

Extra Story XLV: Manga SS – The first big step of the great pioneers

"Seyaaaa!!"

The big axe cuts open the stomach of the big sized demonic monkey.

The mamono falls along with a showy blood spray.

It must have been the decisive blow, because that figure of the mamono only being able to twitch signaled the end of the battle.

"Fumu, well, that's about it-jaro. Even if each of you are powerless, you can

flexibly divide the roles with those skills and classes of yours. Instead of getting desperate in increasing your ability here, it would be better to concentrate on increasing the total strength of the party. That will serve as a shortcut to getting stronger-jaro na.”

“Meaning, ‘don’t be fixated on your level’?”

“No. But well, it would be stupid to be too fixated and charge into danger because of it-ja. But in the case of you guys, level will follow on its own. Different from me...”

A conspicuous samurai, Tomoe, was watching over the group’s battle without interfering in any way and just speaking. As she said something that sounded as if she were giving them a passing grade, she gave them advice.

This place is the first base in the wasteland ‘Ando’, so it is one of the branching routes.

If one continues forward from there, they would arrive at the fifth base created in the wasteland, ‘Chiana’, but it is at quite the distance.

In terms of the base to base distance in the wasteland, the bigger the distance, the higher the danger level that route has.

And in reality, the adventurers that challenge this land and come to Ando to take a rest, when they have to consider their next route, taking the Chiana route will not even enter in the options.

Only a few would loiter around that place due to circumstances regarding requests.

By the way, the route that is the most chosen is the shortest one, and connects to the second base made, Rinkawa.

Then, why are Toa and her comrades here?

The initial reason is because they are here to do a gather request, and the other, the actual number one reason, to receive battle instructions from Tomoe.

And so, the reason why Tomoe had designated this route, where only regular adventurers who wish for death would come, is because there’s no people

around.

This is almost already an open secret, but Toa's party are currently under the care of the two that are said to be strongest in Tsige, Tomoe and Mio.

If with even that, they were to get trained at the wasteland personally by those two, it could bring a bad stimulus for the other adventurers.

If this were Makoto, he would have just done training wherever, but Tomoe at least took consideration of this.

After Toa's party finished the necessary gathering for the request, Tomoe invited them deeper into the wasteland with a smile, and the party felt as if their legs would give out, but 'if you don't take this offer, we won't be interacting with your party as much in the future', is the underlying meaning they felt from the words of Tomoe, so they steeled themselves and proceeded further in.

True to its name as a suicidal path, Toa's party was attacked viciously, but with the advice of Tomoe, and her occasional assistance, they somehow have managed to fight it through.

A nest of Demonic Monkeys; a situation that could only be described as an adventurer killer hell, they managed to splendidly come back alive from it.

"Different from Tomoe-sama...? Ouch ouch."

"Even if I were to fight a hell lot while concentrated on leveling, it only increases by a little bit after all. In the first place, the role of you adventurers should be to explore the unknown, right? Then, isn't it a matter of fact that you would get fixated to your level that is basically the representation of how much you have killed? Levels are simply byproducts of your results in your path to getting the necessary strength. That what it means-ja. Don't stop thinking, do your best; it is as simple as that-ja yo." (Tomoe)

Tomoe speaks of levels in a derogatory manner; the levels that adventurers see as the representation of their status.

Most of the reason behind it must be because her previous training journey didn't bring pleasing results.

“Increasing several tens of levels with a single expedition when your level already surpassed the thousands isn’t just ‘a little bit’ though.” (Toa)

Toa laughs bitterly.

Tomoe sweeps her gaze once on Toa and her comrades, and then, narrows her eyes.

(That just now was a battle that was quite close to their limits, and yet... they really got some spirit there. If I don’t shape them up in the time I can take care of them, they will become baggage that will unnecessarily worry the heart of Waka. I will be wringing you guys out in a short period, so prepare yourselves.) (Tomoe)

“But to think we would be able to defeat this many shadow tails on our own...” (Luisa)

The elf archer, Luisa, mutters this as she seriously stares at their own fruits of battle, at the heaps of corpses after the battle.

This demonic monkeys, Shadow Tails, are dangerous existences for wasteland adventurers even when fighting only one of them.

They have high intelligence that allows them to use several kinds of magic, dexterous movements, claws coated in poison, sharp fangs; on top of that, they call for the reinforcements, and set up ambushes, making even a lot of seasoned wasteland adventurers hate these guys.

To put it in perspective, before they met with Makoto and moved together, that kind of opponent would have taken them all to defeat one of them by ganging up on it.

But today, the party managed to defeat more than 40 Shadow Tails.

In a dangerous area that had basically turned into a monster room, with the guidance of Tomoe, they set up a surprise attack, and, even if they did get help from Tomoe in the preparations, the battle itself was done only by Toa’s party.

This will turn into confidence.

Toa and her comrades were all tasting deep emotions as they confirmed their own fruits of battle.

Specially the shadow tail boss that the dwarf, Ranina, finished off just a few moments ago, a special individual that enters the category of Lords.

Its looks and battle ability are on a whole different level from the regular Shadow Tail.

It was a deadly struggle.

But what was obtained from this was big.

...Even in the materialistic kind of sense.

“You see, Shadow Tails...! Their tails are nice! They can be sold at a high price! Also, the claws that have changed in color due to being coated in poison!! You can also sell those at a high price!!” (Hazal)

The alchemist, Hazal, immediately began collecting the materials.

As the name Shadow Tail states, their characteristic tail is the most popular material of them.

When they are alive, their tails are covered in some sort of black haze that feels as if it were hovering between having and not having substance, but when they die, they settle into a state where they are like tubes with tar stuffed in.

They serve as ingredients for powerful talismans, or for special armours.

The two tails that the Lord has will probably be the thing that will fetch the highest price this time around.

And then, the claws would follow immediately after.

The poison that the Shadow Tails use to kill their prey including hyumans has seeped into their claws after a long time, and there are rare cases when the color of the claws themselves change.

This is an important material for alchemists to use in medicine.

Moreover, if it is the claws of an individual that has lived for long, its hardness increases, and it can also serve as a material for weapons.

Within this party, if they were to make arrows for Luisa or a dagger for Toa from those claws, they would definitely become reliable weapons.

“Get all the claws from the Lord, even the ones that are not colored, okay?

They can serve plenty well even as simple weapons after all.” (Toa)

Toa speaks to Hazal, who happily went to dismantle the Lord, as she herself began to dismantle the other ones.

There's quite the number of corpses after all.

Luckily, it is not amount that they can't bring all back, but there's no doubt that it will be a tough job.

When the sun goes down, the danger level of the wasteland increases all around.

This time around, Toa's party doesn't have any business that requires them to defeat a special mamono that only appears at night. In that case, they should begin their job as soon as possible, and leave as soon as they finish.

“Umu, hurry. After this, I will have you guys pass the night at a place that is slightly more troublesome.” (Tomoe)

“...Wa?” (Ranina)

Ranina unconsciously stopped dismantling and looked at Tomoe.

She was showing the same wide smile that she showed when she told them that they would be raiding the nest of the monkeys.

In other words, she wasn't joking.

“Uhm, Tomoe-sama? Wasn't this battle this time's lesson?” (Ranina)

“This was a preliminary battle-ja.” (Tomoe)

“““““EEEHHH?!”““““

The shouts of the party overlapped perfectly.

Splendid teamwork.

“I wanted to know if you guys had the ability to destroy a nest properly. It was a test, a test-ja yo.” (Tomoe)

“...Uhm, where are we supposed to camp at?” (Hazel)

The face of Hazel as he asked this was twitching.

“A camp close to a water source would be the perfect place-ja yo. From here,

it would be...around three hours, maybe." (Tomoe)

"...Could it be..." (Luisa)

The blood drains from Luisa's face.

The hint of Tomoe had led her to one place.

"T-That place does indeed look like it would be ideal for camping the night, but just at a glance, Tomoe-sama." (Luisa)

"Umu, it is one of the places that you guys call as graveyards, right? There's a lot of materials there. Consider it a bonus from me." (Tomoe)

"That place huh... Uuuh..." (Ranina)

Ranina lets out a low groan of despair.

The spot, where at day is decently safe but at night the danger level shoots up radically, had surfaced in her mind.

"And then, when morning comes, I will have you guys destroy another monkey nest like this one -by yourselves." (Tomoe)

"""?!"

"With this trial, the first step in my battle instruction to you guys has been wrapped. Now then, collect the materials quickly. If you dilly-dally too much, I will add one more mamono subjugation before camping, got it?" (Tomoe)

Toa and the other members saw that tone and expression of Tomoe that said wouldn't allow any talking back, and with a grim expression, they all hurried their hands.

"...Tomoe-sama." (Toa)

"What is it-ja, Toa?" (Tomoe)

"No matter how you put it, I feel like that is way too much. Even just now, it was thanks to Tomoe-sama adjusting the amount of Shadow Tails we would be fighting that we were able to win." (Toa)

"..."

"Moreover, camping the night at such a dangerous place. We do feel like we

are getting stronger, but we still don't have that level of strength to—" (Toa)

"You do." (Tomoe)

"Eh?" (Toa)

"You guys already have plenty enough strength in yourselves. What's next is to learn how to use that strength and learn how to stand up for yourselves. And also, it is a matter of resolve-ja." (Tomoe)

Tomoe answers the doubts of Toa.

Not by comforting her or inspiring her, but by speaking the truth.

It is true that Tomoe was adjusting the amount of Shadow Tails they would be fighting at once depending on the situation, but at the same time, she was also observing the potential that can be currently pulled out from Toa's party.

Subjugating a Shadow Tail nest with one party -Tomoe was saying they have that kind of power already.

She also told them the factors that they were lacking to achieve that.

In other words, Tomoe was telling them that they will be getting that by tonight.

"Strength, awareness, and resolve..." (Toa)

Toa was making a complicated expression. It was as if she had been told that what they need in order to win is friendship and effort.

For adventurers, the saying of 'justice wins' is just an illusion.

"Don't worry. I will pull that out of you guys even if by force. Also, the town will soon get busy. We have to hurry a bit on our side as well. Seriously, how restless-ja." (Tomoe)

"??"

"...Fumu. Well, not telling you anything might be a bit too harsh. If I were to say 'you are not in a standing to know', it would be the end of it, but as you guys have caught the eye of Waka, it should be fine for you guys to have some side-benefits." (Tomoe)

"Eh?" (Toa)

“It is reputation-ja yo, Toa.” (Tomoe)

“.....”

“In terms of a suitable mamono for you guys, it is true that there’s one that would fit you better than those monkeys. Also, in terms of a place to camp the night, there’s a place that has similar conditions only an hour from here. But this time around, that place won’t work-ja.” (Tomoe)

“It won’t?” (Toa)

Tomoe said that the Shadow Tails weren’t the ideal opponents, and that it is necessary to camp the night in the graveyard that will take quite the time to arrive at.

The reason is reputation.

But Toa and her party didn’t understand the true meaning with the information Tomoe had given them.

“...Listen well. The mamonos that the adventurers in Tsige and the four bases around this area hate the most are those monkeys that are currently lying there-ja.” (Tomoe)

“Yes. Shadow Tails move in groups, and there are many times when they would ignore territorial limitations to raid you. There are even instances where they would team up with other mamonos. Their reputation is that of super evolved goblins.” (Toa)

They are troublesome mamonos, are extremely aggressive, are strong individually but also create groups; Shadow Tails are problematic mamonos that bring about enormous pain to the adventurers.

But well, for strong wasteland adventurers, they are degraded to a good source of pocket money though.

Toa and the others, who have been at the deepest wasteland base, reaching this answer naturally was proof that they had challenged dangers in a place where they didn’t belong in.

On the other hand, Tomoe had researched the memories of low and mid grade adventurers for the mamonos that they hate the most, and she reached

to the existence of the Shadow Tails.

“That’s why, by destroying their nests, you will bring back the materials that will serve as backing for your words, and your reputation will increase. I am not talking about the reputation you will receive from the townspeople as adventurers. What I will have you guys gain this time around is the respect and gratitude of adventurers just like you guys-ja.” (Tomoe)

“Ah.” (Toa)

“And then, while at it, in the course of your camp at the graveyard that is closest to Tsige, you will hunt mamonos there. You guys are different from me. The achievements you guys have accomplished are close to what other adventurers can achieve-ja yo. To the point that it can bring forth unnecessary envy and animosity.” (Tomoe)

“Uh...” (Toa)

“From now on, the town will grow bigger, and within the big influx of adventurers and people, if you guys were to stay as adventurers that bring out achievements as you have always done, it would be so dangerous it would be nerve-racking. You have to become aces that possess both ability and attitude... or it won’t be long before you guys get crushed. Even if you guys have special assistance from the guild.” (Tomoe)

““““....””””

“Obtain achievements that are easy to catch the eye of people from your same trade, and while doing that, challenge your limits, but don’t become reckless. Think about how people in town of your same trade and residents think about you guys.” (Tomoe)

“I see. As Tomoe-sama taught us, increasing levels is just a byproduct, right?” (Toa)

Toa nodded with a meek expression.

And then, she learns about the meaning of the words Tomoe first said.

The achievements that adventurers on their peak manage to get and the minusses it creates. They felt ashamed that they were not aware of this.

It couldn't be helped.

The party of Toa was so incredibly elated with their comeback that they couldn't see their surroundings.

~~~~~ .....

The others aside from Toa also stopped their hands and nodded with a serious expression.

"That's why, quickly bring judgment to the hated ones and get respected. It is fine to just have them learn that you are cut different from the rest. It won't work if they think you guys only have luck..... Well, that's something I would also like to advice our Waka on though. With him specifically, he could forcefully crunch you, shoulder toss you, and he would be able to get away with it. I don't even know how to deal with that..." (Tomoe)

"A-Ahahaha..."

Tomoe leaks out her worries regarding Makoto.

Toa and the others know about a part of the actual strength of Tomoe's master, Makoto, so they could only laugh dryly.

It is true that he is an unknown existence that would be able to overcome most of anything while laughing.

With the topic of Makoto coming out, the mood around had lightened a bit.

"Ah right, I almost forgot. The nest you guys will be raiding will have close to a hundred. The boss monkey had three tails. If you fight with so many unnecessary movements like you did today, you will all be crushed by sheer force of numbers. Make sure to properly make countermeasures by tonight." (Tomoe)

"Wa?! Tonight as in tonight?!" (Toa)

"Oi oi, there's no two nights in one day, right? Of course-ja." (Tomoe)

After this, the adventures of Toa's party had created many stories, and they earned great popularity.

One of the early tales of them, the subjugation of Shadow Tails, was one of

the catalysts of their popularity.

But there's one thing that the different iterations of the Shadow Tail subjugation story all have in common, their mentors.

The mentors that guided them. Women shrouded in mystery that are said to already have the same strength as a Brave, but for some reason, their names are hidden and are simply called as Blue Mentor and Black Mentor.

The imposing and severe trial that the Blue Mentor gave them at the beginning was the subjugation of the Shadow Tails, is what everyone mentions. No, if one had to say the exact words they spoke when they brought this point, it would be: 'It is a mystery how they are alive'.

In stories, there's many instances where Spirits are the ones that are compared to as the existences that bring death.

The Black Mentor that, on the surface, takes a cold attitude, but at times acts kind; the Blue Mentor that, on the surface, seems to be easy to get along with and is cheerful, but constantly pushes you to one or two steps on the brim of death.

The reality is still shrouded in darkness, but within the researchers that study the great pioneers, the adventurer party with Toa as the leader – 'Alpine', these two were existences of incredible interest.

Tomoe who smilingly pushes and doesn't allow retreat while the party of Toa hold their heads and scream.

These are the happenings of a few days before the party had turned from simply lucky adventurers to being acknowledged as the aces of Tsige.

## **Extra Story XLVI: Manga SS – Plucked out talent**

–Now that I think about it, what was the correct answer?

–Where did I go wrong?

At an extravagant room that would be able to take the space of several small houses, Tomoki, who had been living a pretty decent quality of life in Japan as well, hadn't even seen this level of extravagance before, but now, this is his room.

They told him with an apologetic tone 'this is a narrow place, but it is only temporary, so please bear with it for now', and the place they guided him was this.

When preparations are done, just what kind of room will he be living in?

The hero that descended into the Gritonia Empire, Iwahashi Tomoki, was thinking as he made a dry laugh, and for now, he calmed down.

And then, when his expression changed to a dark one, he remembered his bitter past.

Why did he become the target of bullying?

Even now, he hasn't been able to find an answer he can be satisfied with, and it is a big worry of his that is always occupying a side of his mind.

Those worries are...

-What should I have done to avoid it?

-What was the correct way to act?

Those kind of questions.

(Should I have just gone all the way for a plastic surgery?)

He was popular with the girls.

He thinks the biggest reason for the bullying was this.

Physical activity wasn't a specialty of his and his body was slender, but he was tall.

His face was like that of a delicate beauty that one would think came straight from a shoujo manga.

He himself didn't do anything special to his skin, and yet, his skin was also beautiful.

That's why, even before entering middle-school, at elementary school and kindergarten, girls would swarm him as well.

In regards to that, it wasn't all rose and flowers.

Because there were many cases when he would be shown way too excessive goodwill including skinship, he had been cornered to the point where he was close to having gynophobia.

But after he began going out with one of them, and obtaining experience with a few more, the wound in his heart was able to recover to a slight degree.

In reality, the reason why Tomoki was popular with the girls was not thanks to his face alone.

...The reason for being bullied was also not because of that alone though.

Maybe because he has been in that kind of environment since infancy, from the bottom of his heart, Tomoki has acted kindly towards women, and has obtained the ability to hear out the conversations of the girls with a demeanor of interest.

The clothes and accessories he wore felt like a natural mesh; his fashion sense was a natural high.

Compared to the guys of the same age, Tomoki looked like an incredibly mature person in the eyes of the girls.

When he was in the late years of middle school, his father, who works in the advertisement industry, had asked him a few times to be a model, and Tomoki has decorated a number of pages before.

A household that doesn't have any incommodes, a body and face that is enough for people to request him to be a model, on top of that, fashionable.

In elementary to middle school, his body and heart matured even more, and with that, there was no way that he wouldn't stand out.

The wider his outlook, the more charming he was.

(Maybe it was a bad idea to be involved in modeling? But someone like me, who was asked a favor from his parent, would at most get a role as a standin, and I don't remember ever flaunting about it. I knew well that I only got those

kind of roles because my father coincidentally was in that kind of industry. What I was doing was literally earning pocket money.) (Tomoki)

Tomoki stood up from the sofa, threw his body onto the big bed, and lets out a sigh.

It is completely wrong.

...At the age of middle school and high school, those are the times when the words like talent are the most prominent.

Envy from the same sex, occasional jealousy from the opposite sex...

But at that time, Tomoki was disconcerted thinking that what he did everyone else could do.

It is true that, at first, he was selected because of the job of his father, but it is rare to be called to be a model several times.

If whichever one of the parents were quite the famous people, it would be possible to be called several times.

But...Tomoki's father may have been a capable person, but he was by no means someone in the casting department or someone who had enough influence to use his name as authority.

In the first place, standins are not things that happen often.

The surroundings had noticed a long time ago.

That Tomoki had the talent for that area.

Meaning that it was due to the influence of his parents.

And in reality, his father had received several contracts from companies asking to employ his son.

At the very least, since Tomoki's second year of middle school, he has been asked to work not as a standin, but actual work.

But towards his son that hadn't noticed his own talent at all and just worked as if it were a pain, his father told him that he would increase his allowance, so to please help him out to save him face. He would quickly bring talk to Tomoki about sudden requests for standins.

They have spoken as father and son a number of times.

About whether he would want to work seriously as a model.

About consulting with the teacher of his current school and choosing a high school that would accommodate such work.

But because his father was saying the complete opposite of what he told him when he was featured in pages of a magazine: 'Don't think it was your ability', 'don't get conceited', and 'studying comes first', his current words didn't resonate much in his son.

(Give me a break. In the entertainment industry, no matter if it is a model, performer, or actor, only a few handful manage to survive. It is a world where you have to pass your whole life in a scraping battle of talent and individuality. There's no way I would survive in there. Why would my father bring out such stupid talk. Before entering middle school, he would always tell me 'study for the private school exams', 'don't drop your grades'. That's all he talked about, and yet...) (Tomoki)

When entering the photo shoot, Tomoki would obviously meet other models.

Whether they be men or women.

In there, it was a place for serious battle.

For Tomoki who came there with the intention to gain pocket money, with the feel of doing a part-time job, it was simply like looking at the opposite side of the shore, but he had gulped his breath at how grand it was.

Look a bit better than the others.

Be in the lenses for a bit longer than the others.

—More than anyone here.

In this battle that felt like a spiral of resentment, for Tomoki who had no resolve at all, it wasn't a peaceful sight like that of scooping water, but the very depiction of ogres hitting each other with metal rods.

But within those ogres, there were some that were harsh, but most of them interacted with Tomoki as kind brothers or sisters.

There was even a child actor that had gotten attached to him and treated him like a true older brother.

Tomoki saw this as them considering him an outside existence in their battle world, and that made him feel relieved.

But it was the contrary.

Iwahashi Tomoki should have noticed at around that time.

Many of the older male actors invited Tomoki to a meal with an older brother act, and called him out saying they would teach him some nice places.

Most of the female models would do casual talk about fashion, hobbies, and those kind of things while actively closing distance. On top of that, they would invite him to lunch and would try to seduce him.

That's not because they didn't see him as an enemy.

In the few times Tomoki had been working together with them, in the few conversations they have had, he had defeated them.

Violent levels of dazzling talent.

Just like how Tomoki and his father feel, it isn't easy to survive in the entertainment industry. That's true.

But there are exceptions.

Within the many people that try to shine in that place with hard work, there are exceptions that emit overwhelming light in their natural state.

A young boy, that is only serving as a standin due to his father and is simply getting pocket money, who just has a bit of good looks, takes poses in photoshoots, and can't freely change his expressions; he should need training and experience.

He is a beginner that is not affiliated to any company and doesn't have a manager, so he shouldn't be able to get special featured pages from several magazines and shouldn't get several requests to appear in dramas.

He had sketched a jacket and said 'it would be nice if there were something like this', and if there hadn't been a reporter who was shocked by this and had

made it a real product, it wouldn't have been a hit. Of course, there wouldn't be a talk about helping him out in creating a new brand either.

Moreover, the talks about being featured in a newspaper, offers to appear in dramas, and the creation of a brand, the models around Tomoki had advised him and Tomoki himself rejected those offers.

Regarding the jacket, his name wasn't published, but the results of it had properly been transmitted to the people involved.

Work offers were coming to him one after the other.

Seeing a middle school student managing to do so many unreasonable things one after the other with close to no effort, many of the people in that entertainment industry had given up.

It is not that he wasn't being acknowledged by the others, they had surrendered.

(As I thought...being a model was a bad idea. It made me strangely famous, pushing me into the go-home club, and making me have few friends... But I refused all confessions. I didn't take the girlfriends of no one. And yet, why was I still hated...) (Tomoki)

It wasn't just within the school, Tomoki's existence was known in the neighborhood. If one were to observe the path to school of Tomoki, you would easily be able to see many girls from neighboring schools in their different uniforms.

The number of confessions were quite a lot, but he rejected them all.

He was slightly interested in going out with a girl, but his fear still won over his curiosity, and for Tomoki, his time with manga, games, and his few friends was more important.

('I won't go out with anyone', is the kind of intention I tried to show though. Haha... and it was as if I had lost everything because of it. Even though Ryuji was...for me, the first true friend I got.) (Tomoki)

He had a lot of things, but he was unenergetic and negative to everything.

Even so, the amount of times the 'results' of Tomoki were transmitted from

the net, SNS, magazines, and the talk of girls began to change the view the others had of him into jealousy and anger.

He was bullied by the male students within the school, but within the male students, there was actually one close friend of Tomoki in his same grade that still continued to stay amicable with him.

You could say he was the only one Tomoki could call a friend since the moment the bullying had begun to surface and turned into ignoring.

Tomoki was deeply moved, thinking that he might have, for the first time, met a friend that he could speak his heart out with.

If it was with him, he could speak as much as he wanted to the point of forgetting the passage of time.

For the first time in his life, he had been invited to stay in the house of someone.

Ryuji works a sweat in a sports club, and at a glance, they appear as if they were polar opposites, and yet, Tomoki had fun being with him.

The physical education classes that, in the past, he would almost always be absent of, after meeting Ryuji, he had been influenced enough that he would now take part in about half of the time.

The face of that person surfaced in the memory of Tomoki.

At the same time, his chest began to hurt.

Since the day that friend of his, Ryuji, had averted his gaze and ignored him, Tomoki began to fear going to school.

Tomoki knew that Ryuji had an unrequited love towards a childhood friend of his that has been with him since elementary school.

Tomoki knows how she looks as well.

He has spoken to her a number of times when she was together with Ryuji.

That's why...when Tomoki received a confession of her...Tomoki tried to piece vague words that would not hurt her, and ended up unconsciously saying this instead:

“Sorry. Just you alone, I will never be able to accept.” (Tomoki)

In the priority list of Tomoki, Ryuji was number one.

The result and the words...soon made her go running to Ryuji in tears to spit out her anger.

On top of that, because Ryuji concentrated in his club activities, he didn't have good grades.

And, Tomoki, who found the times together with Ryuji as the most fun, didn't have anything to do anymore. He began to neglect the studies that he had done decently in the past. Thus, the times he had to take supplementary lessons together with Ryuji had increased.

It is not as if Tomoki had slacked because he wanted to take the supplementary lessons.

It is just that, the studying that he didn't like in the first place, he began to feel even less worth in it, so he stopped doing it seriously, that's all there was.

But the result was the same.

Tomoki hasn't pitied Ryuji even once. If it is envy and respect, he has done so a number of times.

But at that time, Ryuji felt like...Tomoki was pitying him.

A crack had been driven in.

The connection between the two had been destroyed.

Even with that, if they brought out the courage, it might have been possible to fix that relationship with time.

That's right. If only Tomoki hadn't thrown everything away and passed pointless time...and if he hadn't been found by the Goddess.

“Ara, what splendid talent. Nice. A natural born fashion sense, right? Sensitive to fashion. The fashion that he likes could turn into a trend. Also...ufufufufu. This boy might be able to bring a new sense of beauty to my world. Even if that's not the case, there's no doubt that he will serve as a good stimulus to it.”

She had fallen in love with the talent of Tomoki.

She immediately gathered the information regarding the background that surrounds him.

He is convenient.

That's all the impression the Goddess had of him.

A perfect candidate to be her hero was right before her eyes.

"Something like the demon race, with one more human and my assistance, we will be able to crush them really quick. Rather than stressing about the battle, a hero that has overflowing talent fitting for what comes after would be better. Right, if I were to give him the [Charm Demonic Eyes], I wonder if he would wag his tail to me." (Bug)

In the endings of many mythologies, there's an incredibly low amount where that kind of power would lead the user to a happy ending.

But there was no hesitation from the Goddess.

It is a profitable ability. It would be a great charity to him if she were to give it to him.

What's next would be whether the person using it is worthy of the power, or can become an existence worthy of that power.

That's not something the God should think about. It is the so called 'trial' that Gods give to people.

Anyways, within the negotiation between the Goddess and Tomoki, she managed to bring out the answer she wanted from him, and ended the talk.

That's all.

"Oh well, nothing matters anymore. I have become a hero. This time for sure, I will do things properly. With my power, this time for sure, everything...!"  
(Tomoki)

With a teary face that one couldn't describe as cheerful at all, Tomoki, who had become the Empire's hero, forced out a smile and said this.

A single boy that suddenly disappeared without a single trace.

A lot of speculations flew around, and there were many who agreed in

helping in the search.

But the situation didn't change one bit.

It was suspected that there might be a connection between his disappearance and the one of a highschool girl that disappeared around the same time.

Iwahashi Tomoki had disappeared.

His father found doodles in Tomoki's room and hurriedly relied on his connections. And with that, the drawings turned into products with the brand of TOMO and became a big hit.

His parents decorated the inside of the house with those clothes as if they were mementos of Tomoki.

But he didn't return to the Iwahashi household.

The needles of the clock were still unmoving.

Simply left behind.

## **Extra Story XLVII: At that time in the modern era ②**

Gyokuryuki.

A swordsmen festival that is done every year at summer.

It is divided in high school division and general division.

At a glance it has unreasonable rules, and in reality, it does have unreasonable rules, but this is a tradition that has continued till the modern era. It is that kind of kendo competition.

By the way, if you look back at the past, it was actually a swordsmanship competition, but for some reason, the details of those times are recorded in a vague manner, so no problems could be found and, since the time it was changed into a kendo competition, it was considered as the first Gyokuryuki competition.

This year, it was in its 150th competition.

It was created by Imperial idealists and has managed to bring out world competitors representing Japan, and it hasn't failed to take place every year which attests to the fearsome dedication they have to their predecessors, or maybe because of their own passion.

Or maybe the existences called swordsmen actually possess quite the political power in this nation since the past until now, but it goes unseen within the bright front of these grandly opened event where swordsmen of the whole nation are gathered.

"...It is kendo, so there's no doubt those kind of things would be best."

The mutter of the man had a tone of resignation as well as slight sadness mixed.

There's more than 2,000 teams and the schedule barely manages it.

The individual matches were finally scrapped last year.

The rule of girls being able to participate in the boy's division has long since been gone.

For these man who had won first place twice in a row in a time when it could called be a chaotic competition where everything goes, there must be things he simply can't agree with yet.

"Even though the roster of the old men doesn't ever change... this might be my last time coming here to watch."

This man, who still utilizes the katana in the modern era for its original purpose, is without doubt an abnormal existence.

Name is Ishido Genichi.

The man that won the Gyokuryuki in his second and third year of high school and then disappeared from the kendo world.

But well, it is not as if he had cut off all his connections to it. He still maintains a deep connection to the world of the sword.

"It is time, huh. In these few years, there hasn't been anything interesting."

Hm?" (Genichi)

"Sensei! Ibuki-san says he wants to greet you..."

"Ah, okay." (Genichi)

"Also..."

"What is it?" (Genichi)

The disciple that Ishido brings around had come running to him at quite the speed and tells him what he had to, but then, he mumbled as if having difficulty to speak further.

"Right now the high school students are in their summer break, so uhm...I think it would be a good idea to go to Nakatsuhara to practice after you have finished your rounds of greeting."

"Nakatsuhara? The city where Natsu and Makoto are, huh. And, training? Training who?" (Genichi)

Hearing the name of the city, he spoke the name of the two friends that immediately popped up in his mind.

But, how weird. From what he remembers, neither of those are even disciples of his.

He did try to recruit the boy called Makoto, but he has only taught him the way to swing.

There's no doubt that he is interested in his growth, but there's no urgent business that warrants him to hurry from Kyushu to there.

Seeing the state of his master, the disciple lets out a long long sigh.

"It is about Otonashi, Sensei. After last year's Gokuryuki, Sahara-san and Yuki-san had introduced her to you."

"Otonashi? At last year's competition, you say..." (Genichi)

"Didn't you make her your disciple under the introduction of the two? Since then, she has been pretty passionate in training in the places where she can go to, you know?"

"It was a request, huh. Those kind of things don't remain in my memories for

some reason. But even if I don't meet her personally, you guys should be able to train her for the time being, right?" (Genichi)

"We were asked to have Ishido-sensei train her at least once personally. She is truly a zealous girl. It is rare to find those nowadays. I also ask of Sensei, please—"

"—Ah, that girl, huh. She had consecutive victories as the vice-captain." (Genichi)

It seems like Genichi finally remembered Otonashi, he spoke about the match she was in.

The disciple nods as if relieved.

"That's right! The captain also had quite the ability, but I think that Otonashi was one head above everyone in the competition including the men. At that time, the Nakatsuhara high school was the eye of the typhoon."

By the way, this year, Otonashi Hibiki didn't participate.

Nakatsuhara high school ended up in fourth place.

They may not have gotten to the finals like in the last tournament, but it was quite the high result.

"Well, she did have talent." (Genichi)

"...I am not saying this out of favoritism, but her potential was truly a head above the others. It is true that they got the better of her in the finals because of the exhaustion brought by the continuous matches, but her opponent was also quite strong. Even in the standards of women."

Otonashi had been fascinated by the swordsmanship of Ishido. She became extremely diligent and took all the training that she could.

She also gained quite the high evaluation from the best pupil of Ishido.

'There's no complains in regards to her attitude', is what his disciple was trying to say in his expression.

"Your eye for people is bad." (Genichi)

"Eh?!"

"That's a by-the-rule sword. You should have been able to clearly see that in the preliminaries and the finals." (Genichi)

"...Even if you tell me that..."

"Those kind of people that swing their sword with that kind of attitude are boring. Specially the finals. If it were a person that pushed their all in those circumstances, no matter if they had been a man or a woman, I personally would have gone there to recruit them." (Genichi)

(That girl seems to be adept at surviving in the world. Probably from the same cut as the old man Ibuki. Ugh, nope nope. At that time...it was nice until the point when she properly fought back even when she knew that her opponent was half a head better than her, but the moment she saw that it was a difference that could be filled up in a few months, she seemed to have lost all interest and purposely lost. Maybe she doesn't like to stand out too much, or it might be because something happened within the club; whichever it is, that cold attitude, she is not interested in victory through the sword. Leaving aside her talent, she is boring as a swordsman.) (Genichi)

"No way... Even if she is cold or not, her talent is the real deal."

"I get it, geez! I just have ta go to that Nakatsuhara place and train that Oto... Oto-chan, right?" (Genichi)

This could be said to be Genichi's way of favoritism.

What he is talking about are the types that would learn the way of the sword while having a gun in their pocket for emergencies. They would also be attentive to bullets themselves, and they would actively try to avoid swinging their weapons.

'They are simply polishing their sword style as a mean'.

That's why they won't be interested in winning or losing.

And in reality, at the finals of last year, when she lost at the finals, her opponents raised a shout of victory and were happy about their win, but Hibiki simply smiled at her comrades as if feeling sorry and apologized to them.

She didn't feel frustrated a single bit, and showed some tears when their

second place was decided simply to match her surroundings. She only looked like a fake.

“Sensei... In my opinion, the one I don’t understand is that Makoto guy though. That guy doesn’t even do kendo.”

For some reason, his disciple gave his personal opinion about the boy that his master was interested in.

It is true that, in terms of sword talent, he is a commoner compared to Otonashi Hibiki. No surprise in that.

“You can’t get how interesting that guy is? Hmm, it is to be expected. Now then, if we are going to Nakatsuhara, let’s finish the greetings quickly.”  
(Genichi)

“...Please do. Ibuki-san and a few others are waiting at Waiting Room B while having a chat.”

“Ibuki... Ibuki, huh. That Youkai old man is also from Nakatsuhara, right. Why do we have to go to that den of thieves?” (Genichi)

“Because they are sponsors that are contributing greatly in the kendo society! Let me say this, I don’t know why Ishido-sensei tries to bite the hand of people that are practically the very representation of filial piety! There’s a limit to being rebellious!”

“...True. You are a good person.” (Genichi)

“??”

“This may be a good opportunity. How about it? I can talk it out with the Old Man, I mean, with Ibuki so, how about trying your hand at opening your own dojo? Well, in this era, it will mainly be a kendo class though.” (Genichi)

“?! Really?!”

He doesn’t have any dissatisfaction in his current position of being the disciple of Ishido.

But as he accumulated training, he did begin thinking about his destination as a swordsman.

There were some within his seniors that would work as mercenaries, and some that would work as instructors that teach soldiers close-combat.

Both are jobs that require to be overseas.

On the other hand, the majority would make dojos at their homelands or cities.

There's difference in balance between kendo and swordsmanship depending on the land, but being a bit over his thirties already, he has been thinking lately about wanting to settle in a position of being the owner of a kendo dojo.

He knows that he is not fit to move around battlefields like his master.

Ishido doesn't force his disciples to take a predetermined path in their sword.

He lets his disciples decide their position on their sword and themselves, and their position towards others.

If they were to ask for advice, he will respond but, for example, in the case of this man, Ishido wouldn't go preaching to him about the exaltation of the battlefield and cutting down people, and also the happiness of overcoming death.

(In terms of sword ability, this guy would be within the top five of the most talented disciples I have had, but...rather than cutting down people, he is overwhelmingly more fit to raise the next generations of swordsmen. He is not suited to be in the world of deceive or be deceived where the Ibuki old man stands in.) (Genichi)

"I will soon be getting work overseas. I wouldn't be able to apologize enough to your parents if you were to get hit by a stray bullet by making you tag along with me. You are plenty strong to shoulder the Ishido name. Moreover, we will be passing by Osaka on our way to Nakatsuhara." (Genichi)

"Osaka? Yeah."

It is true that they will be passing Osaka on the way.

They plan on using the railroads to travel after all.

"Actually, there's talk about wanting to make a dojo in Osaka. Moreover, with quite the good conditions." (Genichi)

“...”

“But there’s no hurry here. If I remember correctly...you are from Niigata, right?” (Genichi)

“Yes.”

“Then think about it from now. About where you want to have your dojo. Well then, let’s go.” (Genichi)



“Hoh, so you will finally become independent! This is something to celebrate!”

“Y-Yes, thank you very much! This was something that my master suddenly told me just a few moments ago though...”

“A few moments ago? Meaning that, aside from you two, you have granted this old man the honor of being the first one to hear this news?”

“Yeah, that’s how it would be. And so, I was thinking about whether it will be in Osaka or in his homeland, or who knows, somewhere else he would like. Then, he would hang the Ishido signboard. And if possible, I would like it if you were to give us a celebratory gift.” (Genichi)

“Sensei!!”

“Hahaha, a really straight ball as always.”

A loud cheerful voice reverberates.

At the point of attention, there’s Ishido Genichi and his disciple, and there’s also the biggest sponsor of the Gyokuryuki, Ibuki Kaname.

The Ibuki household doesn’t even come from Kyushu, but they support kendo and its growth to a great extent, and in the kendo society, there’s practically no one who doesn’t know his name.

“Well well, congratulations. The number one disciple of Ishido Genichi, Tanaka Yoshimi! If it is you, you will be able to succeed no matter the place! Right, how about choosing Nakatsuhara as your place to open the dojo?” (Kaname)

"Ah, to think Ibuki-san would know the name of someone like me...I am moved. Just that, about the place of the dojo, I am thinking about opening it at my homeland." (Tanaka)

"...Umu, if I remember correctly, Tanaka-kun is from Niigata, Nagaoka, right? As a governmental designated land, Niigata stands out, but no worries, the Niigata prefecture overflows with uniqueness. Nagaoka is also a splendid place!" (Kaname)

It is true that the homeland of Ishido's disciple, Tanaka, is Nagaoka in the Niigata prefecture.

But it is not as if they have met each other many times in the past, and yet, Ibuki knew about his background in a truly detailed manner.

The conversation bloomed when the topic moved to Nagaoka.

Tanaka was pulled by this individual called Ibuki even more than before, and with just a few words, he began to think it wouldn't be that bad of an idea to have a dojo in Nakatsuhara rather than his own homeland.

...Truly shrewd.

(This old man, time and time again. Cajoling people in an instant. Tanaka is not suited to be a manslayer. He hasn't touched the strings of this old man, so he won't be seeing his hidden face, but this old man would go far with just the fact that the other party is my disciple after all. No matter how many times he does this, I can't simply brush him away. Such a troublesome person, seriously.) (Genichi)

Ishido looks at the face of Kaname that seems as if he were truly happy from the bottom of his heart.

He has a vague idea of what will be happening after this.

He will say things like: 'leave the search for a plot of land to me' and 'I will have a friend advertise your place' as if it were not a big deal.

And he smoothly operates it.

As a result of this old man called Ibuki Kaname swimming splendidly in the economic world, the Ibuki household that was simply a local rich family had

become one of the most prominent assets of Japan after Kaname had taken the helm.

That influence rung through the whole nation.

He also continuously yet abundantly scatters out money to things like sports, cultural activities, and charity projects, while saying humble stuff and increasing his own stock.

(Even though he should be close to 80, he still has a voice that rings clearly and can still speak well. Don't they understand that he is scattering money here and there because he is profiting even more? Can't they at least think for a bit about how he gets that absurd amount of money?) (Genichi)

Ishido felt drained at the sight of Ibuki's name rising rapidly in the industries it is connected in.

There's no way Ibuki is a pure and kind soul.

The representation of filial piety, a hobbyist; there's no way that's the case.

Ibuki Kaname is a youkai.

A legit youkai that managed to fight and outperform the politicians in the Showa era.

And yet, Tanaka and the many soft people sing praises about how kind he is.

Ishido wanted to sigh.

"But it is a surprise. Ibuki-san is knowledgeable of Niigata, huh." (Tanaka)

"It is simply from word-of-mouth. In my times, there was a big politician that was called as Old Man which I was involved with, and I naturally had to go there a number of times. Aah, how nostalgic. Do the young ones know about the Mikuni ridge's explosion?" (Kaname)

"Yeah, of course!" (Tanaka)

"In the present, it has become more of a funny story, but he was actually a pretty interesting person. Yoshimi-kun, your family name is Tanaka, so maybe you are related?" (Kaname)

"None, none! I am just a Tanaka!" (Tanaka)

“Ahahaha...” (Kaname)

He managed to naturally go into calling him by his first name in a truly smooth manner as the conversation of the two continued.

Ishido simply replied with gestures at times.

(You were actually the one who blew up a hill in Brazil and left garimpeiros <gold miners> in tatters though. Or more like, my disciple, if you continue to be swallowed by the conversation, you will end up being pushed a wife as well, you know?) (Genichi)

Genichi remembered one past deed of Ibuki Kaname.

He decides on asking the Ibuki youkai for some concrete assistance before his disciple gets swallowed even more than this.

And just as he was about to speak up.

“Yoshimi-kun, this was truly a fun time. Thanks for keeping company to this old man. And so, this may be a rude topic for a man that is trying to take a path on his own, but...” (Kaname)

“Eh?”

“I have taken a liking to you. I am also incredibly indebted to your master, Genichi-kuni. And, I have heard that you were mainly the one who trained Hibiki-chan.” (Kaname)

“Hibi...ah, Otonashi?” (Tanaka)

“That’s why...how about leaving all matters of your dojo to me? Of course, I will be taking care of the plot of land, the establishment, and a place for you to live as well. And I would also be grateful if you were to allow me the advertisement of your dojo too.” (Kaname)

“Wa...”

The one who leaked out his voice unconsciously was Ishido.

The contents of his assistance are better than usual.

Kaname wants Tanaka Yoshimi as his protege because he is the disciple of Ishido, so it is totally different from matters like working as a manslayer.

Without even trying to change him, he brought out quite the good offer, which naturally made Ishido get cautious since the one doing the offering is someone you can't lower your guard on.

Tanaka himself had lost the ability to speak due to how big the matter was.

It was as if he were saying 'I will be looking after everything in your life at Niigata'.

Combined with the surprise brought by the mention of Otonashi Hibiki, Tanaka had become a scarecrow that could only absentmindedly stand in place.

"What's the matter, Genichi-kun?" (Kaname)

"Nah, I was just surprised at how excessive that gift was. Also, I didn't expect the name of Otonashi Hibiki coming out." (Genichi)

"It should be natural for it to come out." (Kaname)

"?"

Kaname was truly disappointed that Ishido hadn't arrived at the reason to why.

"That Yuki, can't even do a job as a messenger properly? How troublesome. Otonashi Hibiki-chan is an important girl for the Ibuki household. This may be the first time you hear about this though." (Kaname)

"It is indeed a first. I think she is a bit too young for her to be a mistress of yours." (Genichi)

"S-Sensei?! How can you say something like that?!" (Tanaka)

The two didn't really mind the confusion of the disciple.

"Now now, Yoshimi-kun. It is true that she is way too young to be a mistress. I would say it would require about 2 years more~." (Kaname)

Even with that, he would still be more than half a century older than her.

"?!?!"

"I am joking. That girl is the fiancee of my grandson." (Kaname)

"Wa? Fiancee?" (Genichi)

"Yeah. Hmm, when you are out overseas for too long, you can even forget the historically profound Japanese language huh. Here, let me spell it out. I-NA-ZU-KE." (Kaname)

For an 80 year old man, he was truly a playful one.

"I understand what it means. The question is not that. Having a fiancee in this day and age, old man, are you serious?" (Genichi)

"Serious as serious can get. I have been telling you since long ago, right? An older court lady... blah blah." (Kaname)

The old man looks back at his past wives and avoided speaking out a popular saying that didn't really fit.

"...I have something to talk about with you later. Is that okay?" (Genichi)

"Of course it is. If it is a conversation with Genichi-kun, I would go anywhere. The presents I would get in hell would increase." (Kaname)

"Uhm, Sensei, I..." (Tanaka)

"You taught the future wife of the Ibuki household about the sword. Getting at least this much reward should be okay." (Genichi)

"Umu, I expect Hibiki-chan to properly support Masamune in the future!" (Kaname)

Leaving aside the possibility, in the end, there won't be a future where such a thing will actually happen.

The disappearance of Otonashi Hibiki and Misumi Makoto that would happen soon after this had made the plans of Ibuki Kaname slip off heavily, and when Masamune heard the talk of cancelling the arranged marriage, he unintentionally shouted a 'lucky!', and ended up receiving the iron fist of his grandfather he hadn't received in years.

And then, Ibuki Masamune would end up struggling for a long time between the friendship he has with Makoto, and the budding love inside of him.

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